

The  
Oxford Book  
Of Modern Verse  
1892-1935

Chosen by  
W. B. Yeats

*Oxford University Press*

BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS

FIRST PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 1936  
REPRINTED DECEMBER 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939  
1941, 1942, 1947, 1952, 1955  
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# INTRODUCTION

## I

**I** HAVE tried to include in this book all good poets who have lived or died from three years before the death of Tennyson to the present moment, except some two or three who belong through the character of their work to an earlier period. Even a long-lived man has the right to call his own contemporaries modern. To the generation which began to think and read in the late eighties of the last century the four poets whose work begins this book were unknown, or, if known, of an earlier generation that did not stir its sympathy. Gerard Hopkins remained unpublished for thirty years. Fifty-odd years ago I met him in my father's studio on different occasions, but remember almost nothing. A boy of seventeen, Walt Whitman in his pocket, had little interest in a querulous, sensitive scholar. Thomas Hardy's poems were unwritten or unpublished. Robert Bridges seemed a small Victorian poet whose poetry, published in expensive hand-printed books, one could find behind glass doors in the houses of wealthy friends. I will consider the genius of these three when the development of schools gives them great influence. Wilfrid Blunt one knew through the report of friends as a fashionable

## INTRODUCTION

amateur who had sacrificed a capacity for literature and the visible arts to personal adventure. Some ten years had to pass before anybody understood that certain sonnets, lyrics, stanzas of his were permanent in our literature. A young man, London bred or just arrived there, would have felt himself repelled by the hard, cold energy of Henley's verse, called it rhetoric, or associated it in some way with that propaganda whereby Henley, through the vehicle of a weekly review and a magazine that were financial failures, had turned the young men at Oxford and Cambridge into imperialists. 'Why should I respect Henley?' said to me Clement Shorter. 'I sell two hundred thousand copies a week of *The Sphere*; the circulation of *The National Observer* fell to two hundred at the end.' Henley lay upon the sofa, crippled by his incautious youth, dragged his body, crutch-supported, between two rooms, imagining imperial might. For a young man, struggling for expression, despairing of achievement, he remained hidden behind his too obvious effectiveness. Nor would that young man have felt anything but contempt for the poetry of Oscar Wilde, considering it an exaggeration of every Victorian fault, nor, except in the case of one poem not then written, has time corrected the verdict. Wilde, a man of action, a born drama-



## INTRODUCTION

tist, finding himself overshadowed by old famous men he could not attack, for he was of their time and shared its admirations, tricked and clowned to draw attention to himself. Even when disaster struck him down it could not wholly clear his soul. Now that I have plucked from the *Ballad of Reading Gaol* its foreign feathers it shows a stark realism akin to that of Thomas Hardy, the contrary to all its author deliberately sought. I plucked out even famous lines because, effective in themselves, put into the Ballad they become artificial, trivial, arbitrary; a work of art can have but one subject.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,  
By each let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word.  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword!  
Some kill their love when they are young,  
And some when they are old;  
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,  
Some with the hands of Gold;  
The kindest use a knife, because  
The dead so soon grow cold.

I have stood in judgement upon Wilde, bringing into the light a great, or almost great poem, as he himself had done had he lived; my work gave me that privilege.

## INTRODUCTION

### II

All these writers were, in the eye of the new generation, in so far as they were known, Victorian, and the new generation was in revolt. But one writer, almost unknown to the general public—I remember somebody saying at his death ‘no newspaper has given him an obituary notice’—had its entire uncritical admiration, Walter Pater. That is why I begin this book with the famous passage from his essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Only by printing it in *vers libre* can one show its revolutionary importance. Pater was accustomed to give each sentence a separate page of manuscript, isolating and analysing its rhythm; Henley wrote certain ‘hospital poems,’ not included in this book, in *vers libre*, thinking of his dramatic, everyday material, in that an innovator, but did not permit a poem to arise out of its own rhythm as do Turner and Pound at their best and as, I contend, Pater did. I shall presently discuss the meaning of this passage which dominated a generation, a domination so great that all over Europe from that day to this men shrink from Leonardo’s masterpiece as from an over-flattered woman. For the moment I am content to recall one later writer:

O wha’s been here afore me, lass,  
And hoo did he get in?

## INTRODUCTION

The revolt against Victorianism meant to the young poet a revolt against irrelevant descriptions of nature, the scientific and moral discursiveness of *In Memoriam*—‘When he should have been broken-hearted,’ said Verlaine, ‘he had many reminiscences’—the political eloquence of Swinburne, the psychological curiosity of Browning, and the poetical diction of everybody. Poets said to one another over their black coffee—a recently imported fashion—‘We must purify poetry of all that is not poetry’, and by poetry they meant poetry as it had been written by Catullus, a great name at that time, by the Jacobean writers, by Verlaine, by Baudelaire. Poetry was a tradition like religion and liable to corruption, and it seemed that they could best restore it by writing lyrics technically perfect, their emotion pitched high, and as Pater offered instead of moral earnestness life lived as ‘a pure gem-like flame’ all accepted him for master.

But every light has its shadow, we tumble out of one pickle into another, the ‘pure gem-like flame’ was an insufficient motive; the sons of men who had admired Garibaldi or applauded the speeches of John Bright, picked Ophelias out of the gutter, who knew exactly what they wanted and had no intention of committing suicide. My father gave these young men their right name. When I had described a supper

## INTRODUCTION

with Count Stenbock, scholar, connoisseur, drunkard, poet, pervert, most charming of men, he said 'they are the Hamlets of our age'. Some of these Hamlets went mad, some drank, drinking not as happy men drink but in solitude, all had courage, all suffered public opprobrium—generally for their virtues or for sins they did not commit—all had good manners. Good manners in written and spoken word were an essential part of their tradition—'Life', said Lionel Johnson, 'must be a ritual'; all in the presence of women or even with one another put aside their perplexities; all had gaiety, some had wit:

Unto us they belong,  
To us the bitter and gay,  
Wine and woman and song.

Some turned Catholic—that too was a tradition. I read out at a meeting of The Rhymers' Club a letter describing Meynell's discovery of Francis Thompson, at that time still bedded under his railway arch, then his still unpublished *Ode to the Setting Sun*. But Francis Thompson had been born a Catholic; Lionel Johnson was the first convert; Dowson adopted a Catholic point of view without, I think, joining that church, an act requiring energy and decision.

Occasionally at some evening party some young woman asked a poet what he thought of

## INTRODUCTION

strikes, or declared that to paint pictures or write poetry at such a moment was to resemble the fiddler Nero, for great meetings of revolutionary Socialists were disturbing Trafalgar Square on Sunday afternoons; a young man known to most of us told some such party that he had stood before a desk in an office not far from Southampton Row resolved to protect it with his life because it contained documents that would hang William Morris, and wound up by promising a revolution in six months. Shelley must have had some such immediate circle when he wrote to friends urging them to withdraw their money from the Funds. We poets continued to write verse and read it out at 'The Cheshire Cheese', convinced that to take part in such movements would be only less disgraceful than to write for the newspapers.

## III

Then in 1900 everybody got down off his stilts; henceforth nobody drank absinthe with his black coffee; nobody went mad; nobody committed suicide; nobody joined the Catholic church; or if they did I have forgotten.

Victorianism had been defeated, though two writers dominated the moment who had never heard of that defeat or did not believe in it; Rudyard Kipling and William Watson. Indian

## INTRODUCTION

residence and associations had isolated the first, he was full of opinions, of politics, of impurities—to use our word—and the word must have been right, for he interests a critical audience to-day by the grotesque tragedy of ‘Danny Deeever’, the matter but not the form of old street ballads, and by songs traditional in matter and form like the ‘St. Helena Lullaby’. The second had reached maturity before the revolt began, his first book had been published in the early eighties. ‘Wring the neck of rhetoric’ Verlaine had said, and the public soon turned against William Watson, forgetting that at his best he had not rhetoric but noble eloquence. As I turn his pages I find verse after verse read long ago and still unforgettable, this to some journalist who, intoxicated perhaps by William Archer’s translations from Ibsen, had described, it may be, some lyric elaborating or deepening its own tradition as of ‘no importance to the age’:

Great Heaven! When these with clamour shrill  
Drift out to Lethe’s harbour bar  
A verse of Lovelace shall be still  
As vivid as a pulsing star:

“  
this, received from some Miltonic cliff that had  
it from a Roman voice:

The august, inhospitable, inhuman night  
Glittering magnificently unperturbed.

## INTRODUCTION

### IV

Conflict bequeathed its bias. Folk-song, unknown to the Victorians as their attempts to imitate it show, must, because never declamatory or eloquent, fill the scene. If anybody will turn these pages attending to poets born in the 'fifties, 'sixties, and 'seventies, he will find how successful are their folk-songs and their imitations. In Ireland, where still lives almost undisturbed the last folk tradition of western Europe, the songs of Campbell and Colum draw from that tradition their themes, return to it, and are sung to Irish airs by boys and girls who have never heard the names of the authors; but the reaction from rhetoric, from all that was prepense and artificial, has forced upon these writers now and again, as upon my own early work, a facile charm, a too soft simplicity. In England came like temptations. The *Shropshire Lad* is worthy of its fame, but a mile further and all had been marsh. Thomas Hardy, though his work lacked technical accomplishment, made the necessary correction through his mastery of the impersonal objective scene. John Synge brought back masculinity to Irish verse with his harsh disillusionment, and later, when the folk movement seemed to support vague political mass

## INTRODUCTION

excitement, certain poets began to create passionate masterful personality.

We remembered the Gaelic poets of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries wandering, after the flight of the Catholic nobility, among the boorish and the ignorant, singing their loneliness and their rage; James Stephens, Frank O'Connor made them symbols of our pride:

The periwinkle, and the tough dog-fish  
At eventide have got into my dish!  
The great, where are they now! the great had said—  
This is not seemly, bring to him instead  
That which serves his and serves our dignity—  
And that was done.

I am O'Rahilly:  
Here in a distant place I hold my tongue,  
Who once said all his say, when he was young!

I showed Lady Gregory a few weeks before her death a book by Day Lewis. 'I prefer', she said, 'those poems translated by Frank O'Connor because they come out of original sin.' A distinguished Irish poet said a month back—I had read him a poem by Turner—'We cannot become philosophic like the English, our lives are too exciting.' He was not thinking of such



## INTRODUCTION

passing episodes as civil war, his own imprisonment, but of an always inflamed public opinion that made sonnet or play almost equally perilous; yet civil war has had its effect. Twelve years ago Oliver Gogarty was captured by his enemies, imprisoned in a deserted house on the edge of the Liffey with every prospect of death. Pleading a natural necessity he got into the garden, plunged under a shower of revolver bullets and as he swam the ice-cold December stream promised it, should it land him in safety, two swans. I was present when he fulfilled that vow. His poetry fits the incident, a gay, stoical—no, I will not withhold the word—heroic song. Irish by tradition and many ancestors, I love, though I have nothing to offer but the philosophy they deride, swashbucklers, horsemen, swift indifferent men; yet I do not think that is the sole reason, good reason though it is, why I gave him considerable space, and think him one of the great lyric poets of our age.

## VI

We have more affinity with Henley and Blunt than with other modern English poets, but have not felt their influence; we are what we are because almost without exception we have had some part in public life in a country

## INTRODUCTION

where public life is simple and exciting. We are not many; Ireland has had few poets of any kind outside Gaelic. I think England has had more good poets from 1900 to the present day than during any period of the same length since the early seventeenth century. There are no predominant figures, no Browning, no Tennyson, no Swinburne, but more than I have found room for have written two, three, or half a dozen lyrics that may be permanent.

During the first years of the century the best known were celebrators of the country-side or of the life of ships; I think of Davies and of Masefield; some few wrote in the manner of the traditional country ballad. Others, descended not from Homer but from Virgil, wrote what the young communist scornfully calls 'Belles-lettres': Binyon when at his best, as I think, of Tristram and Isolt: Sturge Moore of centaurs, amazons, gazelles copied from a Persian picture: De la Mare short lyrics that carry us back through *Christabel* or *Kubla Khan*.

Through what wild centuries  
Roves back the rose?

The younger of the two ladies who wrote under the name of 'Michael Field' made personal lyrics in the manner of Walter Savage Landor and the Greek anthology.

## INTRODUCTION

None of these were innovators; they preferred to keep all the past their rival; their fame will increase with time. They have been joined of late years by Sacheverell Sitwell with his *Canons of Giant Art*, written in the recently rediscovered 'sprung verse', his main theme changes of colour, or historical phase, in Greece, Crete, India. *Agamemnon's Tomb*, however, describes our horror at the presence and circumstance of death and rises to great intensity.

## VII

Robert Bridges seemed for a time, through his influence on Laurence Binyon and others less known, the patron saint of the movement. His influence—practice, not theory—was never deadening; he gave to lyric poetry a new cadence, a distinction as deliberate as that of Whistler's painting, an impulse moulded and checked like that in certain poems of Landor, but different, more in the nerves, less in the blood, more birdlike, less human; words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing,

A glitter of pleasure  
And a dark tomb,

or by some trick of simplicity, not the impulsive

## INTRODUCTION

simplicity of youth but that of age, much impulse examined and rejected:

I heard a linnet courting  
His lady in the spring!  
His mates were idly sporting,  
Nor stayed to hear him sing  
His song of love.—  
I fear my speech distorting  
His tender love.

Every metaphor, every thought a commonplace, emptiness everywhere, the whole magnificent.

## VIII

A modern writer is beset by what Rossetti called 'the soulless self-reflections of man's skill'; the more vivid his nature, the greater his boredom, a boredom no Greek, no Elizabethan, knew in like degree, if at all. He may escape to the classics with the writers I have just described, or with much loss of self-control and coherence force language against its will into a powerful, artificial vividness. Edith Sitwell has a temperament of a strangeness so high-pitched that only through this artifice could it find expression. One cannot think of her in any other age or country. She has transformed with her metrical virtuosity traditional metres reborn not to be read but spoken, exaggerated meta-

## INTRODUCTION

phors into mythology, carrying them from poem to poem, compelling us to go backward to some first usage for the birth of the myth; if the storm suggest the bellowing of elephants, some later poem will display 'The elephant trunks of the sea'. Nature appears before us in a hashish-eater's dream. This dream is double; in its first half, through separated metaphor, through mythology, she creates, amid crowds and scenery that suggest the Russian Ballet and Aubrey Beardsley's final phase, a perpetual metamorphosis that seems an elegant, artificial childhood; in the other half, driven by a necessity of contrast, a nightmare vision like that of Webster, of the emblems of mortality. A group of writers have often a persistent image. There are 'stars' in poem after poem of certain writers of the 'nineties as though to symbolize an aspiration towards what is inviolate and fixed; and now in poem after poem by Edith Sitwell or later writers are 'bones'—'the anguish of the skeleton', 'the terrible Gehenna of the bone'; Eliot has:

No contact possible to flesh  
Allayed the fever of the bone.

and Elinor Wylie, an American whose exquisite work is slighter than that of her English contemporaries because she has not their full

## INTRODUCTION

receptivity to the profound hereditary sadness of English genius:

Live like the velvet mole:  
Go burrow underground,  
And there hold intercourse  
With roots of trees and stones,  
With rivers at their source  
And disembodied bones.

Laurence Binyon, Sturge Moore, knew nothing of this image; it seems most persistent among those who, throwing aside tradition, seek something somebody has called 'essential form' in the theme itself. A fairly well-known woman painter in September drew my house, at that season almost hidden in foliage; she reduced the trees to skeletons as though it were mid-winter, in pursuit of 'essential form'. Does not intellectual analysis in one of its moods identify man with that which is most persistent in his body? The poets are haunted once again by the Elizabethan image, but there is a difference. Since Poincaré said 'space is the creation of our ancestors', we have found it more and more difficult to separate ourselves from the dead when we commit them to the grave; the bones are not dead but accursed, accursed because unchanging.

The small bones built in the womb  
The womb that loathed the bones  
And cast out the soul.

## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps in this new, profound poetry, the symbol itself is contradictory, horror of life, horror of death.

### IX

Eliot has produced his great effect upon his generation because he has described men and women that get out of bed or into it from mere habit; in describing this life that has lost heart his own art seems grey, cold, dry. He is an Alexander Pope, working without apparent imagination, producing his effects by a rejection of all rhythms and metaphors used by the more popular romantics rather than by the discovery of his own, this rejection giving his work an unexaggerated plainness that has the effect of novelty. He has the rhythmical flatness of *The Essay on Man*—despite Miss Sitwell's advocacy I see Pope as Blake and Keats saw him—later, in *The Waste Land*, amid much that is moving in symbol and imagery there is much monotony of accent:

When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone.

I was affected, as I am by these lines, when I saw for the first time a painting by Manet. I longed for the vivid colour and light of Rousseau

## INTRODUCTION

and Courbet, I could not endure the grey middle-tint—and even to-day Manet gives me an incomplete pleasure; he had left the procession. Nor can I put the Eliot of these poems among those that descend from Shakespeare and the translators of the Bible. I think of him as satirist rather than poet. Once only does that early work speak in the great manner:

The host with someone indistinct  
Converses at the door apart,  
The nightingales are singing near  
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood  
When Agamemnon cried aloud,  
And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

Not until *The Hollow Men* and *Ash-Wednesday*, where he is helped by the short lines, and in the dramatic poems where his remarkable sense of actor, chanter, scene, sweeps him away, is there rhythmical animation. Two or three of my friends attribute the change to an emotional enrichment from religion, but his religion compared to that of John Gray, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson in *The Dark Angel*, lacks all strong emotion; a New England Protestant by descent, there is little self-surrender in his personal relation to God and the soul. *Murder in*



## INTRODUCTION

*the Cathedral* is a powerful stage play because the actor, the monkish habit, certain repeated words, symbolize what we know, not what the author knows. Nowhere has the author explained how Becket and the King differ in aim; Becket's people have been robbed and persecuted in his absence; like the King he demands strong government. Speaking through Becket's mouth Eliot confronts a world growing always more terrible with a religion like that of some great statesman, a pity not less poignant because it tempers the prayer book with the results of mathematical philosophy.

Peace. And let them be, in their exaltation.

They speak better than they know, and beyond your understanding,

They know and do not know, that acting **is** suffering  
And suffering is action. Neither does the actor suffer  
Nor the patient act. But both are fixed

In an eternal action, an eternal patience

To which all must consent that it may **be** willed

And which all must suffer that they may **will** it,

That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the  
action

And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still  
Be forever still.

## X

Ezra Pound has made flux his theme; plot, characterization, logical discourse, seem to him

## INTRODUCTION

abstractions unsuitable to a man of his generation. He is mid-way in an immense poem in *vers libre* called for the moment *The Cantos*, where the metamorphosis of Dionysus, the descent of Odysseus into Hades, repeat themselves in various disguises, always in association with some third that is not repeated. Hades may become the hell where whatever modern men he most disapproves of suffer damnation, the metamorphosis petty frauds practised by Jews at Gibraltar. The relation of all the elements to one another, repeated or unrepeatd, is to become apparent when the whole is finished. There is no transmission through time, we pass without comment from ancient Greece to modern England, from modern England to medieval China; the symphony, the pattern, is timeless, flux eternal and therefore without movement. Like other readers I discover at present merely exquisite or grotesque fragments. He hopes to give the impression that all is living, that there are no edges, no convexities, nothing to check the flow; but can such a poem have a mathematical structure? Can impressions that are in part visual, in part metrical, be related like the notes of a symphony; has the author been carried beyond reason by a theoretical conception? His belief in his own conception is so great that since the appear-

## INTRODUCTION

ance of the first Canto I have tried to suspend judgement.

When I consider his work as a whole I find more style than form; at moments more style, more deliberate nobility and the means to convey it than in any contemporary poet known to me, but it is constantly interrupted, broken, twisted into nothing by its direct opposite, nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion; he is an economist, poet, politician, raging at malignants with inexplicable characters and motives, grotesque figures out of a child's book of beasts. This loss of self-control, common among uneducated revolutionists, is rare—Shelley had it in some degree—among men of Ezra Pound's culture and erudition. Style and its opposite can alternate, but form must be full, sphere-like, single. Even where there is no interruption he is often content, if certain verses and lines have style, to leave unbridged transitions, unexplained ejaculations, that make his meaning unintelligible. He has great influence, more perhaps than any contemporary except Eliot, is probably the source of that lack of form and consequent obscurity which is the main defect of Auden, Day Lewis, and their school, a school which, as will presently be seen, I greatly admire. Even where the style is sustained throughout one gets an

## INTRODUCTION

impression, especially when he is writing in *vers libre*, that he has not got all the wine into the bowl, that he is a brilliant improvisator translating at sight from an unknown Greek masterpiece:

See, they return; ah, see the tentative  
Movements, and the slow feet,  
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain  
Wavering!

See, they return, one, and by one,  
With fear, as half-awakened;  
As if the snow should hesitate  
And murmur in the wind,  
                    and half turn back;

These were the Wing'd-with-awe,  
                    Inviolable.  
Gods of the winged shoe!  
With them the silver hounds,  
                    sniffing the trace of air!

## XI

When my generation denounced scientific humanitarian pre-occupation, psychological curiosity, rhetoric, we had not found what ailed Victorian literature. The Elizabethans had all these things, especially rhetoric. A friend writes 'all bravado went out of English literature when Falstaff turned into Oliver Cromwell,

## INTRODUCTION

into England's bad conscience'; but he is wrong. Dryden's plays are full of it. The mischief began at the end of the seventeenth century when man became passive before a mechanized nature; that lasted to our own day with the exception of a brief period between Smart's *Song of David* and the death of Byron, wherein imprisoned man beat upon the door. Or I may dismiss all that ancient history and say it began when Stendhal described a masterpiece as a 'mirror dawdling down a lane'. There are only two long poems in Victorian literature that caught public attention; *The Ring and the Book* where great intellect analyses the suffering of one passive soul, weighs the persecutor's guilt, and *The Idylls of the King* where a poetry in itself an exquisite passivity is built about an allegory where a characterless king represents the soul. I read few modern novels, but I think I am right in saying that in every novel that has created an intellectual fashion from Huysmans's *La Cathédrale* to Ernest Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*, the chief character is a mirror. It has sometimes seemed of late years, though not in the poems I have selected for this book, as if the poet could at any moment write a poem by recording the fortuitous scene or thought, perhaps it might be enough to put into some fashionable rhythm—'I am sitting in a chair,

## INTRODUCTION

there are three dead flies on a corner of the ceiling'.

Change has come suddenly, the despair of my friends in the 'nineties part of its preparation. Nature, steel-bound or stone-built in the nineteenth century, became a flux where man drowned or swam; the moment had come for some poet to cry 'the flux is in my own mind'.

## XII

It was Turner who raised that cry, to gain upon the instant a control of plastic material, a power of emotional construction, Pound has always lacked. At his rare best he competes with Eliot in precision, but Eliot's genius is human, mundane, impeccable, it seems to say 'this man will never disappoint, never be out of character. He moves among objects for which he accepts no responsibility, among the mapped and measured.' Generations must pass before man recovers control of event and circumstance; mind has recognized its responsibility, that is all; Turner himself seems the symbol of an incomplete discovery. After clearing up some metaphysical obscurity he leaves obscure what a moment's thought would have cleared; author of a suave, sophisticated comedy he can talk about 'snivelling majorities'; a rich-natured friendly man he has in his satirical platonic

## INTRODUCTION

dialogue *The Aesthetes* shot upon forbidden ground. The first romantic poets, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, dazed by new suddenly opening vistas, had equal though different inconsistencies. I think of him as the first poet to read a mathematical equation, a musical score, a book of verse, with an equal understanding; he seems to ride in an observation balloon, blue heaven above, earth beneath an abstract pattern.

We know nothing but abstract patterns, generalizations, mathematical equations, though such the havoc wrought by newspaper articles and government statistics, two abstractions may sit down to lunch. But what about the imagery we call nature, the sensual scene? Perhaps we are always awake and asleep at the same time; after all going to bed is but a habit; is not sleep by the testimony of the poets our common mother? In *The Seven Days of the Sun*, where there is much exciting thought, I find:

But to me the landscape is like a sea  
The waves of the hills  
And the bubbles of bush and flower  
And the springtide breaking into white foam!

It is a slow sea,  
*Mare tranquillum*,  
And a thousand years of wind  
Cannot raise a dwarf billow to the moonlight.

## INTRODUCTION

But the bosom of the landscape lifts and falls  
With its own leaden tide,  
That tide whose sparkles are the lilliputian stars.

It is that slow sea  
That sea of adamantine languor,  
Sleep!

I recall Pater's description of the Mona Lisa; had the individual soul of da Vinci's sitter gone down with the pearl divers or trafficked for strange webs? or did Pater foreshadow a poetry, a philosophy, where the individual is nothing, the flux of *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound, objects without contour as in *Le Chef-d'œuvre Inconnu*, human experience no longer shut into brief lives, cut off into this place and that place, the flux of Turner's poetry that within our minds enriches itself, re-dreams itself, yet only in seeming—for time cannot be divided? Yet one theme perplexes Turner, whether in comedy, dialogue, poem. Somewhere in the middle of it all da Vinci's sitter had private reality like that of the Dark Lady among the women Shakespeare had imagined, but because that private soul is always behind our knowledge, though always hidden it must be the sole source of pain, stupefaction, evil. A musician, he imagines Heaven as a musical composition, a mathematician, as a relation of curves, a poet, as a dark, inhuman sea.



## INTRODUCTION

The sea carves innumerable shells  
Rolling itself into crystalline curves  
The cressets of its faintest sighs  
Flickering into filigreed whorls,  
Its lustre into mother-of-pearl  
Its mystery into fishes' eyes  
Its billowing abundance into whales  
Around and under the Poles.

## XIII

In *The Mutations of the Phoenix* Herbert Read discovers that the flux is in the mind, not of it perhaps, but in it. The Phoenix is finite mind rising in a nest of light from the sea or infinite; the discovery of Berkeley in 'Siris' where light is 'perception', of Grosseteste, twelfth-century philosopher, who defines it as 'corporeality, or that of which corporeality is made'.

All existence  
    past, present and to be  
    is in this sea fringe.  
There is no other temporal scene.

The Phoenix burns spiritually  
    among the fierce stars  
    and in the docile brain's recesses.  
Its ultimate spark  
you cannot trace . . .

Light burns the world in the focus of an eye.

## INTRODUCTION

### XIV

To Dorothy Wellesley nature is a womb, a darkness; its surface is sleep, upon sleep we walk, into sleep drive the plough, and there lie the happy, the wise, the unconceived;

They lie in the loam  
Laid backward by slice of the plough;  
They sit in the rock;  
In a matrix of amethyst crouches a man . .

but unlike Turner or Read she need not prove or define, that was all done before she began to write and think. As though it were the tale of Mother Hubbard or the results of the last general election, she accepts what Turner and Read accept, sings her joy or sorrow in its presence, at times facile and clumsy, at times magnificent in her masculine rhythm, in the precision of her style. Eliot and Edith Sitwell have much of their intensity from a deliberate re-moulding or checking of past impulse, Turner much of his from a deliberate rejection of current belief, but here is no criticism at all. A new positive belief has given to her, as it gave to Shelley, an uncheckable impulse, and this belief is all the more positive because found, not sought; like certain characters in William Morris she has 'lucky eyes', her sail is full.

I knew nothing of her until a few months ago

## INTRODUCTION

I read the opening passage in *Horses*, delighted by its changes in pace, abrupt assertion, then a long sweeping line, by its vocabulary modern and precise;

Who, in the garden-pony carrying skeps  
Of grass or fallen leaves, his knees gone slack,  
Round belly, hollow back,  
Sees the Mongolian Tarpan of the Steppes?  
Or, in the Shire with plaits and feathered feet,  
The war-horse like the wind the Tartar knew?  
Or, in the Suffolk Punch, spells out anew  
The wild grey asses fleet  
With stripe from head to tail, and moderate ears?

The swing from Stendhal has passed Turner; the individual soul, the betrayal of the unconceived at birth, are among her principal themes, it must go further still; that soul must become its own betrayer, its own deliverer, the one activity, the mirror turn lamp. Not that the old conception is untrue, new literature better than old. In the greater nations every phase has characteristic beauty—has not Nicholas of Cusa said reality is expressed through contradiction? Yet for me, a man of my time, through my poetical faculty living its history, after much meat fish seems the only possible diet. I have indeed read certain poems by Turner, by Dorothy Wellesley, with more than all the excitement that came upon me when, a very young man, I heard somebody read

## INTRODUCTION

out in a London tavern the poems of Ernest Dowson's despair—that too living history.

### XV

I have a distaste for certain poems written in the midst of the great war; they are in all anthologies, but I have substituted Herbert Read's *End of a War* written long after. The writers of these poems were invariably officers of exceptional courage and capacity, one a man constantly selected for dangerous work, all, I think, had the Military Cross; their letters are vivid and humorous, they were not without joy—for all skill is joyful—but felt bound, in the words of the best known, to plead the suffering of their men. In poems that had for a time considerable fame, written in the first person, they made that suffering their own. I have rejected these poems for the same reason that made Arnold withdraw his *Empedocles on Etna* from circulation; passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece the tragic chorus danced. When man has withdrawn into the quicksilver at the back of the mirror no great event becomes luminous in his mind; it is no longer possible to write *The Persians*, *Agincourt*, *Chevy Chase*: some blunderer has driven his car on to the wrong side of the road—that is all.

## INTRODUCTION

If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering as we do the discomfort of fever, remembering our comfort at midnight when our temperature fell, or as we forget the worst moments of more painful disease. Florence Farr returning third class from Ireland found herself among Connaught Rangers just returned from the Boer War who described an incident over and over, and always with loud laughter: an unpopular sergeant struck by a shell turned round and round like a dancer wound in his own entrails. That too may be a right way of seeing war, if war is necessary; the way of the Cockney slums, of Patrick Street, of the *Kilmainham Minut*, of *Johnny I hardly knew ye*, of the medieval *Dance of Death*.

## XVI

Ten years after the war certain poets combined the modern vocabulary, the accurate record of the relevant facts learnt from Eliot, with the sense of suffering of the war poets, that sense of suffering no longer passive, no longer an obsession of the nerves; philosophy had made it part of all the mind. Edith Sitwell with her *Russian Ballet*, Turner with his *Mare Tranquillum*, Dorothy Wellesley with her ancient names—'Heraclitus added fire'—her moths, horses and serpents, Pound with his descent into Hades, his Chinese

## INTRODUCTION

classics, are too romantic to seem modern. Browning, that he might seem modern, created an ejaculating man-of-the-world good humour; but Day Lewis, Madge, MacNeice, are modern through the character of their intellectual passion. We have been gradually approaching this art through that cult of sincerity, that refusal to multiply personality which is characteristic of our time. They may seem obscure, confused, because of their concentrated passion, their interest in associations hitherto untravelled; it is as though their words and rhythms remained gummed to one another instead of separating and falling into order. I can seldom find more than half a dozen lyrics that I like, yet in this moment of sympathy I prefer them to Eliot, to myself—I too have tried to be modern. They have pulled off the mask, the manner writers hitherto assumed, Shelley in relation to his dream, Byron, Henley, to their adventure, their action. Here stands not this or that man but man's naked mind.

Although I have preferred, and shall again, constrained by a different nationality, a man so many years old, fixed to some one place, known to friends and enemies, full of mortal frailty, expressing all things not made mysterious by nature with impatient clarity, I have read with some excitement poets I had approached with

## INTRODUCTION

distaste, delighted in their pure spiritual objectivity as in something long foretold.

Much of the war poetry was pacifist, revolutionary; it was easier to look at suffering if you had somebody to blame for it, or some remedy in mind. Many of these poets have called themselves communists, though I find in their work no trace of the recognized communist philosophy and the practising communist rejects them. The Russian government in 1930 silenced its Mechanists, put Spinoza on his head and claimed him for grandfather; but the men who created the communism of the masses had Stendhal's mirror for a contemporary, believed that religion, art, philosophy, expressed economic change, that the shell secreted the fish. Perhaps all that the masses accept is obsolete—the Orangeman beats his drum every Twelfth of July—perhaps fringes, wigs, furbelows, hoops, patches, stocks, Wellington boots, start up as armed men; but were a poet sensitive to the best thought of his time to accept that belief, when time is restoring the soul's autonomy, it would be as though he had swallowed a stone and kept it in his bowels. None of these men have accepted it, communism is their *Deus ex Machina*, their Santa Claus, their happy ending, but speaking as a poet I prefer tragedy to tragi-comedy. No matter how great a reformer's energy a still greater is

## INTRODUCTION

required to face, all activities expended in vain, the unreformed. 'God', said an old country-woman 'smiles alike when regarding the good and condemning the lost.' MacNeice, the anti-communist, expecting some descent of barbarism next turn of the wheel, contemplates the modern world with even greater horror than the communist Day Lewis, although with less lyrical beauty. More often I cannot tell whether the poet is communist or anti-communist. On what side is Madge? Indeed I know of no school where the poets so closely resemble each other. Spender has said that the poetry of belief must supersede that of personality, and it is perhaps a belief shared that has created their intensity, their resemblance; but this belief is not political. If I understand aright this difficult art the contemplation of suffering has compelled them to seek beyond the flux something unchanging, inviolate, that country where no ghost haunts, no beloved lures because it has neither past nor future.

This lunar beauty  
Has no history  
Is complete and early;  
If beauty later  
Bear any feature  
It had a lover  
And is another.



## INTRODUCTION

### XVII

I read Gerard Hopkins with great difficulty, I cannot keep my attention fixed for more than a few minutes; I suspect a bias born when I began to think. He is typical of his generation where most opposed to mine. His meaning is like some faint sound that strains the ear, comes out of words, passes to and fro between them, goes back into words, his manner a last development of poetical diction. My generation began that search for hard positive subject-matter, still a predominant purpose. Yet the publication of his work in 1918 made 'sprung verse' the fashion, and now his influence has replaced that of Hardy and Bridges. In sprung verse a foot may have one or many syllables without altering the metre, we count stress not syllable, it is the metre of the *Samson Agonistes* chorus and has given new vitality to much contemporary verse. It enables a poet to employ words taken over from science or the newspaper without stressing the more unmusical syllables, or to suggest hurried conversation where only one or two words in a sentence are important, to bring about a change in poetical writing like that in the modern speech of the stage where only those words which affect the situation are important. In syllabic verse, lyric, narrative, dramatic, all syllables are important.

## INTRODUCTION

Hopkins would have disliked increase of realism; this stoppage and sudden onrush of syllables were to him a necessary expression of his slight constant excitement. The defect or limitation of 'sprung verse', especially in five-stress lines, is that it may not be certain at a first glance where the stress falls. I have to read lines in *The End of a War* as in *Samson Agonistes* several times before I am certain.

## XVIII

That I might follow a theme I have given but a bare mention or none at all to writers I greatly admire. There have, for instance, been notable translators. Ezra Pound's *Cathay* created the manner followed with more learning but with less subtlety of rhythm by Arthur Waley in many volumes; Tagore's translation from his own Bengali I have praised elsewhere. Æ. (George Russell) found in Vedantic philosophy the emotional satisfaction found by Lionel Johnson, John Gray, Francis Thompson in Catholicism and seems despite this identity of aim, and the originality and beauty of his best work, to stand among the translators, so little has he in common with his time. He went to the *Upanishads*, both for imagery and belief. I have been able to say but little of translations and interpretations of modern and medieval Gaelic literature by Lady

## INTRODUCTION

Gregory, James Stephens, Frank O'Connor. Then again there are certain poets I have left aside because they stand between two or more schools and might have confused the story—Richard Hughes, Robert Nichols, Hugh M'Diarmid. I would, if I could, have dealt at some length with George Barker, who like MacNeice, Auden, Day Lewis, handled the traditional metres with a new freedom—*vers libre* lost much of its vogue some five years ago—but has not their social passion, their sense of suffering. There are one or two writers who are not in my story because they seem to be born out of time. When I was young there were almost as many religious poets as love poets and no philosophers. After a search for religious poetry, among the new poets I have found a poem by Force Stead, until lately chaplain of Worcester, and half a dozen little poems, which remind me of Emily Brontë, by Margot Ruddock, a young actress well known on the provincial stage. I have said nothing of my own work, not from modesty, but because writing through fifty years I have been now of the same school with John Synge and James Stephens, now in that of Sturge Moore and the younger 'Michael Field': and though the concentration of philosophy and social passion of the school of Day Lewis and in MacNeice lay beyond my desire, I would, but for a failure of

## INTRODUCTION

talent have been in that of Turner and Dorothy Wellesley.

A distinguished American poet urged me not to attempt a representative selection of American poetry; he pointed out that I could not hope to acquire the necessary knowledge: 'If your selection looks representative you will commit acts of injustice.' I have therefore, though with a sense of loss, confined my selections to those American poets who by subject, or by long residence in Europe, seem to English readers a part of their own literature.

Certain authors are absent from this selection through circumstances beyond my control. Robert Graves, Laura Riding, and the executors of Canon John Gray and Sir William Watson have refused permission. Two others, Rudyard Kipling and Ezra Pound, are inadequately represented because too expensive even for an anthologist with the ample means the Oxford University Press puts at his disposal.

W. B. YEATS

*September, 1936*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**I** MUST gratefully acknowledge the kindness of authors (or their executors) and of publishers in granting me permission to include copyright poems in this book. I name them here: Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, Mr. W. H. Auden, Mr. George Barker, Mr. Julian Bell, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. Laurence Binyon, Mr. Edmund Blunden, Mr. Gordon Bottomley; the executors of the late Mr. Robert Bridges for permission to reprint seven poems; the executors of the late Wilfrid Scawen Blunt for four poems and extracts from a fifth; the literary executors of Rupert Brooke; Mr. Joseph Campbell, Mr. Roy Campbell, Mr. Richard Church, Mr. Padraic Colum, Mr. A. E. Coppard, Mrs. Frances Cornford, Mr. W. H. Davies, Mr. Walter de la Mare; Lady Desborough for the poem by Julian Grenfell; Mr. John Drinkwater, Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mr. William Empson; Mrs. Flecker for permission to include three poems by James Elroy Flecker; Mrs. Freeman for poems by John Freeman; Mr. Wilfrid Gibson; the executors of the late Lady Gregory; Dr. Oliver St. John Gogarty, Mr. F. R. Higgins, Mr. Ralph Hodgson; Captain Vyvyan Beresford Holland for the poem by Oscar Wilde; Mr. Laurence Housman for permission to use five poems by the late A. E. Housman; Mr. Richard Hughes, Mr. James Joyce; Mrs. Frieda Lawrence for poems by the late D. H. Lawrence; Mr. C. Day Lewis, Mr. Hugh M'Diarmid, Mr. Louis MacNeice, Mr. Charles Madge; The Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield, for permission to reprint six poems from *Collected Poems* (Messrs. Heinemann); Mr.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thomas McGreevy, Mr. Edward Powys Mathers; Mr. Wilfrid Meynell for three poems by Alice Meynell and for the poems by Francis Thompson; Mrs. Harold Monro for the poems by the late Harold Monro and for permission to omit stanzas in *Midnight Lamentation* and *Natural History*; Mr. Thomas Sturge Moore for his own poems and those of 'Michael Field'; Sir Henry Newbolt for his poem and for the poem by Mary Coleridge; Mr. Robert Nichols; Mr. Frank O'Connor; The Marchese Origo for the poems by the late Geoffrey Scott; Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto, Mr. William Plomer, Mr. Ezra Pound, the executors of F. York Powell for two poems; Mr. Herbert Read, Mr. Ernest Rhys, Mr. Michael Roberts, Miss Margot Ruddock, Mr. Diarmuid Russell for poems by G. W. Russell, V. Sackville-West, Mr. Siegfried Sassoon, Mr. Edward Shanks, Miss Edith Sitwell, Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell, Mr. Stephen Spender, Sir John Squire, Mr. William Force Stead, Mr. James Stephens, Mr. L. A. G. Strong, Mr. Frank Pearce Sturm, Shri Purohit Swami, Mr. Arthur Symonds; Mr. Edward Synge for permission to use the poems and translations by John Millington Synge; Mr. D. Trench for the poem by his father the late Herbert Trench; Mrs. Thomas for a poem by the late Edward Thomas; Mr. W. J. Turner for twelve poems; Mr. Arthur Waley for the title poem from his book *The Temple* (Messrs. George Allen and Unwin); Mrs. Sylvia Townsend Warner, Lady Gerald Wellesley.

My obligations to publishers are great, and I have to thank Messrs. George Allen and Unwin for the poems

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

by J. M. Synge and Arthur Waley; Messrs. Basil Blackwell for a poem by E. Powys Mathers, one by Manmohan Ghose and one by F. P. Sturm; Messrs. Basil Blackwell and Hamish Hamilton for poems by L. A. G. Strong, and Alfred Knopf for permission to publish them in America; Messrs. Bell and Sons for poems by 'Michael Field'; Messrs. Burns, Oates, and Washbourne for poems by Francis Thompson and Alice Meynell; The Cambridge University Press for two poems by Frances Cornford; Messrs. Jonathan Cape for poems by A. E. Coppard, W. H. Davies, and James Joyce and one poem by Herbert Trench; Messrs. Chatto and Windus for the poems by Richard Hughes, Robert Nichols, one poem by Sylvia Townsend Warner, one by William Empson, and the poem from *The Seven Days of the Sun*, by W. J. Turner; The Clarendon Press for poems by Robert Bridges; Messrs. R. Cobden-Sanderson for poems by Harold Monro and W. F. Stead and for four poems by Edmund Blunden; Messrs. Constable and Co. for a poem by Gordon Bottomley and for poems by Walter de la Mare reprinted from his *Poems 1901 to 1918*; Messrs. J. M. Dent for four poems by W. J. Turner from *Songs and Incantations* and one poem by Richard Church; Messrs. Gerald Duckworth and Co. for poems by Edith Sitwell and one poem by Hilaire Belloc; Messrs. Elkin Mathews and Marrot for the poems by Lionel Johnson, Michael Roberts, and for one poem from *Poems* by Mary E. Coleridge; Messrs. Faber and Faber for poems by Roy Campbell, W. H. Auden, George Barker, T. S. Eliot, Louis MacNeice, Herbert Read, and Stephen Spender, and one poem by Ezra Pound; Messrs. Victor Gollancz for a poem by Edward

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Davison; Messrs. William Heinemann for six poems reprinted from *Collected Poems* by John Masefield, two poems by Thomas McGreevy, four by Siegfried Sassoon, and one by Sir John Squire, and the poems by D. H. Lawrence and Arthur Symons; the Hogarth Press for poems by C. Day Lewis, William Plomer, and V. Sackville-West, and one poem by Julian Bell; Messrs. John Lane, The Bodley Head, for nine poems by Ernest Dowson and a poem by V. de S. Pinto; Messrs. Macmillan and Co. for a poem by Laurence Binyon, six poems by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt from *Collected Poems of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*, eight poems by James Stephens from *Collected Poems*, three poems by Shri Purohit Swami from *An Indian Monk*, seven poems from *The Poems of Sturge Moore*, Collected Edition, poems by Padraic Colum, three poems from *Collected Poems* by John Freeman, four poems from *Collected Poems 1905-1925* by Wilfrid Gibson, four poems from *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, poems by F. R. Higgins, four poems from W. E. Henley's *Poems*, one poem by Ralph Hodgson, poems by Hugh M'Diarmid, poems by G. W. Russell (*Æ*), four poems by Edward Shanks, seven by Rabindranath Tagore, one by Edward Thomas, the extract from *The Renaissance* by Walter Pater, and the poems by Dorothy Wellesley; and finally for my own poems; Messrs. Methuen and Co. for two poems from *Collected Poems* by G. K. Chesterton, and for *The Looking-glass* and *A St. Helena Lullaby* from *Rewards and Fairies* by Rudyard Kipling; Messrs. John Murray for *Drake's Drum* from *Poems Old and New* by Sir Henry Newbolt; the Oxford University Press for poems by Lascelles Abercrombie



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

and G. M. Hopkins; Messrs. Martin Secker for three poems by James Elroy Flecker; The Richards Press for poems by A. E. Housman; Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for two poems by John Drinkwater from his *Collected Poems*, one poem by Rupert Brooke from his *Collected Poems*, one poem by W. J. Turner from *The Dark Fire*, one from *The Hunter and other Poems*, and five from *In Time Like Glass*, and two poems by Edmund Blunden from *The Waggoner and other Poems*.

In America I must thank Messrs. Dodd, Mead and Co. for two poems by Edmund Blunden, one by Rupert Brooke, and two by G. K. Chesterton; Messrs. Doubleday, Doran for *The Looking-glass* and *A St. Helena Lullaby* by Rudyard Kipling; Messrs. Harper Brothers for a poem by Edward Davison; Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Co. for two poems by John Drinkwater; Messrs. A. A. Knopf for two poems by James Elroy Flecker; The Macmillan Co. for poems by George Russell (*Æ*), Wilfrid Gibson, Thomas Hardy, Rabindranath Tagore, John Masefield, and for my own poems; The Modern Library Inc. for poems by John Millington Synge; Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for poems by W. E. Henley; The Viking Press for poems by Thomas McGreevy.

In two cases it has been impossible to trace the author or his executor, and I must therefore apologize for seeming negligence to Thomas Boyd, and to the executors of Edwin J. Ellis.

W. B. Y.



WALTER PATER

1839-1894

I

*Mona Lisa*

SHE is older than the rocks among which she sits;  
Like the Vampire,  
She has been dead many times,  
And learned the secrets of the grave;  
And has been a diver in deep seas,  
And keeps their fallen day about her;  
And trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants;  
And, as Leda,  
Was the mother of Helen of Troy,  
And, as St Anne,  
Was the mother of Mary;  
And all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and  
flutes,  
And lives  
Only in the delicacy  
With which it has moulded the changing lineaments,  
And tinged the eyelids and the hands.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

1840-1922

*Esther (i)*

HE who has once been happy is for aye  
Out of destruction's reach. His fortune then  
Holds nothing secret, and Eternity,

Which is a mystery to other men,  
Has like a woman given him its joy.

Time is his conquest. Life, if it should fret,  
Has paid him tribute. He can bear to die.

He who has once been happy! When I set  
The world before me and survey its range,

Its mean ambitions, its scant fantasies,  
The shreds of pleasure which for lack of change

Men wrap around them and call happiness,  
The poor delights which are the tale and sum  
Of the world's courage in its martyrdom;

*(ii)*

WHEN I hear laughter from a tavern door,  
When I see crowds agape and in the rain  
Watching on tiptoe and with stifled roar

To see a rocket fired or a bull slain,  
When misers handle gold, when orators

Touch strong men's hearts with glory till they weep,  
When cities deck their streets for barren wars

Which have laid waste their youth, and when I keep  
Calmly the count of my own life and see

On what poor stuff my manhood's dreams were fed  
Till I too learned what dole of vanity

Will serve a human soul for daily bread,  
—Then I remember that I once was young  
And lived with Esther the world's gods among.

## WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

### *Depreciating her Beauty*

I LOVE not thy perfections. When I hear  
Thy beauty blazoned, and the common tongue  
Cheapening with vulgar praise a lip, an ear,  
A cheek that I have prayed to;—when among  
The loud world's gods my god is noised and sung,  
Her wit applauded, even her taste, her dress,  
Her each dear hidden marvel lightly flung  
At the world's feet and stripped to nakedness—  
Then I despise thy beauty utterly,  
Crying, 'Be these your gods, O Israel!'  
And I remember that on such a day  
I found thee with eyes bleared and cheeks all pale,  
And lips that trembled to a voiceless cry,  
And that thy bosom in my bosom lay.

### *Honour Dishonoured*

(‘Written in an Irish Prison 1888’)

HONOURED I lived e'erwhile with honoured men  
In opulent state. My table nightly spread  
Found guests of worth, peer, priest and citizen,  
And poet crowned, and beauty garlanded.  
Nor these alone, for hunger too I fed,  
And many a lean tramp and sad Magdalen  
Passed from my doors less hard for sake of bread.  
Whom grudged I ever purse or hand or pen?  
To-night, unwelcomed at these gates of woe  
I stand with churls, and there is none to greet  
My weariness with smile or courtly show  
Nor, though I hunger long, to bring me meat.  
God! what a little accident of gold  
Fences our weakness from the wolves of old!

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

6

*A Nocturne*

THE Moon has gone to her rest,  
A full hour ago.  
The Pleiads have found a nest  
In the waves below.  
Slow, the Hours one by one  
In Midnight's footsteps creep.  
Lovers who lie alone  
Soon wake to weep.  
Slow-footed tortoise Hours, will ye not hasten on,  
Till from his prison  
In the golden East  
A new day shall have risen,  
And the last stars be gone,  
Like guests belated from a bridal feast?  
When the long night is done  
Then shall ye sleep.

7

*From 'The Wisdom of Merlyn'*

WOULDST thou be wise, O Man? At the knees of  
a woman begin.

Her eyes shall teach thee thy road, the worth of the thing  
called pleasure, the joy of the thing called sin.  
Else shalt thou go to thy grave in pain for the folly that might  
have been.

For know, the knowledge of women the beginning of  
wisdom is.

Who had seven hundred wives and concubines hundreds  
three, as we read in the book of bliss?  
Solomon, wisest of men and kings, and 'all of them princesses.'

## WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

Yet, be thou stronger than they. To be ruled of a woman  
is ill.

Life hath an hundred ways, beside the way of her arms,  
to give thee of joy thy fill.

Only is love of thy life the flower. Be thine the ultimate will.

What is the motto of youth? There is only one. Be thou  
strong.

Do thy work and achieve, with thy brain, with thy hands,  
with thy heart, the deeds which to strength belong.

Strike each day thy blow for the right, or failing strike for  
the wrong.

Love is of body and body, the physical passion of joy;

The desire of the man for the maid, her nakedness strained  
to his own; the mother's who suckles her boy

With the passionate flow of her naked breast. All else is a  
fraudulent toy.

Experience all is of use, save one, to have angered a friend.

Break thy heart for a maid; another shall love thee anon.

The gold shall return thou didst spend,

Ay, and thy beaten back grow whole. But friendship's grave  
is the end.

Why do I love thee, brother? We have shared what things  
in our youth,

Battle and siege and triumph, together, always together,  
in wanderings North and South.

But one thing shared binds nearer than all, the kisses of one  
sweet mouth.

## WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

He that hath loved the mother shall love the daughter no less,  
Sister the younger sister. There are tones how sweet to his  
ear, gestures that plead and press,  
Echoes fraught with remembered things that cry in the  
silences.

Friendship is fostered with gifts. Be it so; little presents?  
Yes.

Friendship! But ah, not Love, since love is itself Love's  
gift and it angereth him to have less.

Woe to the lover who dares to bring more wealth than his  
tenderness.

Whence is our fountain of tears? We weep in childhood for  
pain,

Anon for triumph in manhood, the sudden glory of praise,  
the giant mastered and slain.

Age weeps only for love renewed and pleasure come back  
again.

I have tried all pleasures but one, the last and sweetest; it  
waits.

Childhood, the childhood of age, to totter again on the  
lawns, to have done with the loves and the hates,

To gather the daisies, and drop them, and sleep on the  
nursing knees of the Fates.



*Weathers*

(i)

THIS is the weather the cuckoo likes,  
 And so do I;  
 When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,  
 And nestlings fly:  
 And the little brown nightingale bills his best,  
 And they sit outside at 'The Travellers' Rest,'  
 And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,  
 And citizens dream of the south and west,  
 And so do I.

(ii)

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,  
 And so do I;  
 When beeches drip in browns and duns,  
 And thresh, and ply;  
 And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,  
 And meadow rivulets overflow,  
 And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,  
 And rooks in families homeward go,  
 And so do I.

*Snow in the Suburbs*

EVERY branch big with it,  
 Bent every twig with it;  
 Every fork like a white web-foot;  
 Every street and pavement mute:

## THOMAS HARDY

Some flakes have lost their way, and grope back upward, when  
Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.

The palings are glued together like a wall,  
And there is no waft of wind with the fleecy fall.

A sparrow enters the tree,  
Whereon immediately

A snow-lump thrice his own slight size  
Descends on him and showers his head and eyes.

And overturns him,  
And near inurns him,

And lights on a nether twig, when its brush  
Starts off a volley of other lodging lumps with a rush.

The steps are a blanched slope,  
Up which, with feeble hope,  
A black cat comes, wide-eyed and thin;  
And we take him in.

### 10            *The Night of Trafalgar (i)*

**I**N the wild October night-time, when the wind raved  
round the land,

And the Back-sea<sup>1</sup> met the Front-sea, and our doors were  
blocked with sand,

And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where bones of  
thousands are,

We knew not what the day had done for us at Trafalgár.

(All) Had done,

Had done,

For us at Trafalgár!

<sup>1</sup> In those days the hind-part of the harbour adjoining this scene was so named, and at high tides the waves washed across the isthmus at a point called 'The Narrows.'

## THOMAS HARDY

(ii)

'Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go!' one says,  
says he.

We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm; but snug at home  
slept we.

Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through the day,  
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of Cadiz Bay.

The dark,  
The dark,  
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay!

(iii)

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and  
tore,

As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly shore;  
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and far,  
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Trafalgár!

The deep,  
The deep,  
That night at Trafalgár!

II

### *Former Beauties*

THESE market-dames, mid-aged, with lips thin-drawn,  
And tissues sere,  
Are they the ones we loved in years ago,  
And courted here?

Are these the muslined pink young things to whom  
We vowed and swore  
In nooks on summer Sundays by the Froom,  
Or Budmouth shore?

## THOMAS HARDY

Do they remember those gay tunes we trod  
    Clasped on the green;  
Aye; trod till moonlight set on the beaten sod  
    A satin sheen?

They must forget, forget! They cannot know  
    What once they were,  
Or memory would transfigure them, and show  
    Them always fair.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

1844-1930

12

### *Muse and Poet*

*Muse.*

WILL Love again awake,  
    That lies asleep so long?

*Poet.*

O hush! ye tongues that shake  
The drowsy night with song.

*Muse.*

It is a lady fair  
Whom once he deigned to praise,  
That at the door doth dare  
Her sad complaint to raise.

*Poet.*

She must be fair of face,  
As bold of heart she seems,  
If she would match her grace  
With the delight of dreams.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

### *Muse.*

Her beauty would surprise  
Gazers on Autumn eves,  
Who watched the broad moon rise  
Upon the scattered sheaves.

### *Poet.*

O sweet must be the voice  
He shall descend to hear,  
Who doth in Heaven rejoice  
His most enchanted ear.

### *Muse.*

The smile, that rests to play  
Upon her lip, foretells  
What musical array  
Tricks her sweet syllables.

### *Poet.*

And yet her smiles have danced  
In vain, if her discourse  
Win not the soul entranced  
In divine intercourse.

### *Muse.*

She will encounter all  
This trial without shame,  
Her eyes men Beauty call,  
And Wisdom is her name.

### *Poet.*

Throw back the portals then,  
Ye guards, your watch that keep,  
Love will awake again  
That lay so long asleep.

ROBERT BRIDGES

13

*On a Dead Child*

**P**ERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!  
    Though cold and stark and bare,  
The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer  
    To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be  
    Thy father's pride;—ah, he  
Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
    Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond;  
    Startling my fancy fond  
With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:  
    But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;  
    Yet feels to my hand as if  
'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—  
    Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—  
    Propping thy wise, sad head,  
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither  
    hath he taken thee?  
    To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?  
    The vision of which I miss,  
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and  
    awaken thee?

ROBERT BRIDGES

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us  
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,  
Unwilling, alone we embark,  
And the things we have seen and have known and have heard  
of, fail us.

14

*The Storm is over*

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:  
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,  
Is fallen back in the west  
To couch with the sinking sun.  
The last clouds fare  
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly  
In melting drifts of the sky.  
Already the birds in the air  
Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,  
And one by one,  
Proclaiming aloud their care,  
Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,  
They trim afresh the fair  
Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm,  
And awhile will be handsome yet.  
To-morrow's sun shall caress  
Their remnant of loveliness:  
In quiet days for a time  
Sad Autumn lingering warm  
Shall humour their faded prime.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!  
What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,  
That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,  
That sheltered the cooing doves at noon,  
Of airy fans the delicate throng,—  
Torn and scattered around:  
Far out afield they lie,  
In the watery furrows die,  
In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown,  
Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,  
The high year's flaunting crown  
Shattered and trampled down.

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:  
She prays to the night to keep  
In peace her nerves of delight:  
While silver mist upstealeth silently,  
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky  
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,  
And in her tranquil light  
Sleep falls on forest and field.  
Sée! sléep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:  
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

15

### *Weep not To-day*

WEEP not to-day: why should this sadness be?  
Learn in present fears  
To o'ermaster those tears  
That unhindered conquer thee.



ROBERT BRIDGES

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise:  
Up, sad heart, nor faint  
In ungracious complaint,  
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace  
Draweth surely nigh,  
When good-night is good-bye;  
For the sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away  
Deem, nor strange thy doom.  
Like this sorrow 'twill come,  
And the day will be to-day.

16

*I heard a Linnet courting*

I HEARD a linnet courting  
His lady in the spring:  
His mates were idly sporting,  
Nor stayed to hear him sing  
His song of love.—  
I fear my speech distorting  
His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading  
Were full of young delight;  
And she that gave him heeding  
Interpreted aright  
His gay, sweet notes,—  
So sadly marred in the reading,—  
His tender notes.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

And when he ceased, the hearer  
Awaited the refrain,  
Till swiftly perching nearer  
He sang his song again,  
His pretty song:—  
Would that my verse spake clearer  
His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!  
That in the merry spring  
Think not of what misfeatures  
Or cares the year may bring;  
But unto love  
Resign your simple natures,  
To tender love.

17

### *Nightingales*

**B**EAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,  
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, where-  
from

Ye learn your song:  
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,  
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air  
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:  
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,  
A throe of the heart,  
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,  
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,  
For all our art.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men  
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,  
As night is withdrawn  
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of  
May,  
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day  
Welcome the dawn.

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

1844-1889

18

### *The Habit of Perfection*

ELECTED Silence, sing to me  
And beat upon my whorlèd ear,  
Pipe me to pastures still and be  
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:  
It is the shut, the curfew sent  
From there where all surrenders come  
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shellèd, eyes, with double dark  
And find the uncreated light:  
This ruck and reel which you remark  
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,  
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:  
The can must be so sweet, the crust  
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend  
Upon the stir and keep of pride,  
What relish shall the censers send  
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet  
That want the yield of plushy sward,  
But you shall walk the golden street  
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride  
And now the marriage feast begun,  
And lily-coloured clothes provide  
Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun.

19

*Pied Beauty*

**G**LORY be to God for dappled things—  
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh fire-coal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

20

*Spring*

NOTHING is so beautiful as spring—  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning  
In Eden garden.—Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,  
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,  
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

21

*The Caged Skylark*

AS a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage  
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house,  
dwells—

That bird beyond the remembering his free fells;  
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,  
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,  
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells  
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest—  
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his nest,  
But his own nest, wild nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,  
But uncumbered: meadow-down is not distressed  
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.

### 22                    *The Sea and the Skylark*

ON ear and ear two noises too old to end  
Trench—right, the tide that ramps against the shore;  
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar,  
Frequenting there while moon shall wear and wend.

Left hand, off land, I hear the lark ascend,  
His rash-fresh re-winded new-skeinèd score  
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour  
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.

How these two shame this shallow and frail town!  
How ring right out our sordid turbid time,  
Being pure! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,

Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:  
Our make and making break, are breaking, down  
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

23

*Duns Scotus's Oxford*

TOWERY city and branchy between towers;  
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-charmèd, rook-  
racked, river-rounded;

The dappled-eared lily below thee; that country and town did  
Once encounter in, here coped and poisèd powers.

Thou hast a base and brickish skirt there, sours  
That neighbour-nature thy grey beauty is grounded  
Best in; graceless growth, thou hast confounded  
Rural rural keeping—folk, flocks, and flowers.

Yet ah! this air I gather and I release  
He lived on; these weeds and waters, these walls are what  
He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;

Of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller; a not  
Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece;  
Who fired France for Mary without spot.

24 *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*

*(Maidens' song from St. Winefred's Well)*

THE LEADEN ECHO

HOW to kéeep—is there ány any, is there none such, no-  
where known some, bow or biooch or braid or brace,  
láce, latch or catch or key to keep

Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from vanish-  
ing away?

Ó is there no frowning of these wrinkles, rankèd wrinkles deep,  
Dówn? no waving off of these most mournful messengers, still  
messengers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

No there's none, there's none, O no there's none,  
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called *fair*,  
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,  
And wisdom is early to despair:  
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done  
To keep at bay  
Age and age's evils, hoar hair,  
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding  
    sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay;  
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.  
O there's none; no no no there's none:  
Be beginning to despair, to despair,  
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

Spare!

### THE GOLDEN ECHO

There is one, yes I have one (Hush there!);  
Only not within seeing of the sun,  
Not within the singeing of the strong sun,  
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the earth's air,  
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one,  
Oñe. Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place,  
Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's  
    fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of us and  
    swiftly away with, done away with, undone,  
Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and  
    dangerously sweet  
Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-matched  
    face,  
The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to, ah! to fleet,  
Never fleets móre, fastened with the tenderest truth  
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an  
    everlastingness of, O it is an all youth!



## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maiden gear,  
gallantry and gaiety and grace,

Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks,  
loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant,  
girlgrace—

Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them  
with breath,

And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver

Them; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long before  
death

Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God,  
beauty's self and beauty's giver.

See; not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every  
hair

Is, hair of the head, numbered.

Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surly the mere mould  
Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the  
wind what while we slept,

This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold

What while we, while we slumbered.

O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we  
so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed, so  
fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered,

When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,  
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept

Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer,  
fonder

A care kept.—Where kept? Do but tell us where kept,  
where.—

Yonder.—What high as that! We follow, now we follow.—

Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,

Yonder.

*Ballade of Dead Actors*

I. M.

Edward John Henley

(1861-1898)

WHERE are the passions they essayed,  
 And where the tears they made to flow?  
 Where the wild humours they portrayed  
 For laughing worlds to see and know?  
 Othello's wrath and Juliet's woe?  
 Sir Peter's whims and Timon's gall?  
 And Millamant and Romeo?  
 Into the night go one and all.

Where are the braveries, fresh or frayed?  
 The plumes, the armours—friend and foe?  
 The cloth of gold, the rare brocade,  
 The mantles glittering to and fro?  
 The pomp, the pride, the royal show?  
 The cries of war and festival?  
 The youth, the grace, the charm, the glow?  
 Into the night go one and all.

The curtain falls, the play is played:  
 The Beggar packs beside the Beau;  
 The Monarch troops, and troops the Maid;  
 The Thunder huddles with the Snow.  
 Where are the revellers high and low?  
 The clashing swords? The lover's call?  
 The dancers gleaming row on row?  
 Into the night go one and all.

## WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

### *Envoy*

Prince, in one common overthrow  
The Hero tumbles with the Thrall:  
As dust that drives, as straws that blow,  
Into the night go one and all.

26

### *Invictus*

OUT of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

27

*All in a Garden Green*

**I** TALKED one midnight with the jolly ghost  
Of a gray ancestor, Tom Heywood hight;  
And, 'Here 's,' says he, his old heart liquor-lifted—  
'Here 's how we did when Gloriana shone:'

All in a garden green  
    Thrushes were singing;  
Red rose and white between,  
    Lilies were springing;  
It was the merry May;  
    Yet sang my Lady:—  
'Nay, Sweet, now nay, now nay!  
    I am not ready.'

Then to a pleasant shade  
    I did invite her:  
All things a concert made,  
    For to delight her;  
Under, the grass was gay;  
    Yet sang my Lady:—  
'Nay, Sweet, now nay, now nay!  
    I am not ready.'

28     *Since those we love and those we hate*

**S**INCE those we love and those we hate,  
With all things mean and all things great,  
Pass in a desperate disarray  
*Over the hills and far away:*

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

It must be, Dear, that, late or soon,  
Out of the ken of the watching moon,  
We shall abscond with Yesterday  
*Over the hills and far away.*

What does it matter? As I deem,  
We shall but follow as brave a dream  
As ever smiled a wanton May  
*Over the hills and far away.*

We shall remember, and, in pride,  
Fare forth, fulfilled and satisfied,  
Into the land of Ever-and-Aye,  
*Over the hills and far away.*

EDWIN JOHN ELLIS

1848-1918

29

*From 'Himself'*

AT Golgotha I stood alone,  
And trembled in the empty night:  
The shadow of a cross was shown  
And Christ thereon who died upright.

The shadow murmured as I went,  
'I cannot see thee,—who art thou?  
Art thou my friend? or art thou sent  
In hate to rail upon me now.

'I cannot see thee. Art thou one  
Of those I lived to save,—and saved?  
I saved thee; but the sands that run  
Have filled the trace of words engraved.

## EDWIN JOHN ELLIS

'I wrote with finger on the ground  
One pardon, then with blood on wood.  
The priests and elders waited round,  
But none could read of all that stood.

'None read, and now I linger here,  
Only the ghost of one who died,  
For God forsakes me, and the spear  
Runs ever cold into my side.

'I have believed in thee when then  
Thou wert not born, nor might I tell  
Thy face among the souls of men  
Unborn, but yet I loved thee well.

'Pity me now for this my death;  
Love me a little for my love,  
I loved and died, the story saith,  
And telleth over and above

'Of all my early days of want,  
And days of work, and then the end,  
But telleth not how still I haunt  
My place of death and seek a friend.

'My God who lived in me to bless  
The earth He made has passed away;  
And left me here companionless,  
A weary spectre night and day.

'I am the Ghost of Christ the Less,  
Jesus the man, whose ghost was bound  
And banished in the wilderness  
And trodden deep beneath the ground.

## EDWIN JOHN ELLIS

'I saw him go, and cried to him,  
"Eli, thou hast forsaken me!"  
The nails were burning through each limb:  
He fled to find felicity.

'Ah! then I knew the foolish wrong  
That I upon myself had wrought,  
Then floated off that Spirit strong  
That once had seemed my own heart's thought.

'Where is the life I might have known  
If God had never lit on me?  
I might have loved one heart alone,  
A woman white as chastity.

'I might have hated devils and fled  
Whene'er they came. I might have turned  
From sinners, and I might have led  
A life where no sin-knowledge burned.

'But between voice and voice I chose,  
Of these two selves and clave to this:—  
Who left me here where no man knows,  
And fled to dwell with light in bliss.

'And left me here with wound of spears,  
A cast-off ghostly shade to rave,  
And haunt the place for endless years,  
Crying, "Himself he cannot save!"

So spoke the ghost of Joseph's son  
Haunting the place where Christ was slain:  
I pray that e'er this world be done,  
Christ may relieve his piteous pain.

*The Sailor and the Shark*

THERE was a queen that fell in love with a jolly sailor  
bold,

But he shipped to the Indies, where he would seek for gold.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

There was a king that had a fleet of ships both tall and tarred;  
He carried off this pretty queen, and she jumped overboard.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

The queen, the queen is overboard! a shark was cruising round,  
He swallowed up this dainty bit alive and safe and sound.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

Within the belly of this shark it was both dark and cold,  
But she was faithful still and true to her jolly sailor bold.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

The shark was sorry for her, and swam away so fast.  
In the Indies, where the camels are, he threw her up at last.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

On one of these same goodly beasts, all in a palanquin,  
She spied her own true love again—the Emperor of Tonquin.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

She called to him, ‘O stay, my love, your queen is come, my  
dear.’

‘Oh I’ve a thousand queens more fair within my kingdom  
here.’

*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*



## FREDERICK YORK POWELL

'You smell of the grave so strong, my dear.' 'I've sailed in  
a shark,' says she.

'It is not of the grave I smell; but I smell of the fish of the sea.'  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

'My lady loves they smell so sweet; of rice-powder so fine.  
The queen the King of Paris loves no sweeter smells than mine.'  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

She got aboard the shark again, and weeping went her way;  
The shark swam back again so fast to where the tall ships lay.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

The king he got the queen again, the shark away he swam.  
The queen was merry as could be, and mild as any lamb.  
*All in a good sea-boat, my boys, we fear no wind that blows!*

\* \* \* \*

Now all you pretty maidens what love a sailor bold,  
You'd better ship along with him before his love grows cold.  
*(From the French of Paul Fort)*

### 31 *The Pretty Maid*

THE pretty maid she died, she died, in love-bed as she lay;  
They took her to the churchyard: all at the break of day;  
They laid her all alone there: all in her white array;  
They laid her all alone there: a'coffin'd in the clay;  
And they came back so merrily: all at the dawn of day;  
A'singing all so merrily: '*The dog must have his day!*'  
The pretty maid is dead, is dead; in love-bed as she lay;  
And they are off a-field to work: as they do every day.

*(From the French of Paul Fort)*

32

*I am the Way*

THOU art the Way.  
 Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,  
 I cannot say  
 If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

I cannot see—  
 I, child of process—if there lies  
 An end for me,  
 Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach  
 The road that winds, my feet that err.  
 Access, approach  
 Art Thou, Time, Way, and Wayfarer.

33

*The Lady Poverty*

THE Lady Poverty was fair:  
 But she has lost her looks of late,  
 With change of times and change of air.  
 Ah slattern! she neglects her hair,  
 Her gown, her shoes she keeps no state  
 As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or—almost worse, if worse can be—  
 She scolds in parlours, dusts and trims,  
 Watches and counts. Oh, is this she  
 Whom Francis met, whose step was free,  
 Who with Obedience carolled hymns,  
 In Umbria walked with Chastity?

ALICE MEYNELL

Where is her ladyhood? Not here,  
Not among modern kinds of men;  
But in the stony fields, where clear  
Through the thin trees the skies appear,  
In delicate spare soil and fen,  
And slender landscape and austere.

34

*Renouncement*

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,  
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—  
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,  
And in the dearest passage of a song.  
Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng  
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;  
But it must never, never come in sight;  
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.  
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,  
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,  
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,  
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—  
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep  
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

LADY GREGORY

1852-1932

35

*Cold, Sharp Lamentation*

COLD, sharp lamentation  
In the cold bitter winds  
Ever blowing across the sky;  
Oh, there was loneliness with me!

## LADY GREGORY

The loud sounding of the waves  
Beating against the shore,  
Their vast, rough, heavy outcry,  
Oh, there was loneliness with me!

The light sea-gulls in the air,  
Crying sharply through the harbours,  
The cries and screams of the birds  
With my own heart! Oh! that was loneliness.

The voice of the winds and the tide,  
And the long battle of the mighty war;  
The sea, the earth, the skies, the blowing of the winds,  
Oh! there was loneliness in all of them together.

*(From the Irish of Douglas Hyde.)*

### 36 *He meditates on the Life of a Rich Man*

A GOLDEN cradle under you, and you young;  
A right mother and a strong kiss.

A lively horse, and you a boy;  
A school and learning and close companions.

A beautiful wife, and you a man;  
A wide house and everything that is good.

A fine wife, children, substance;  
Cattle, means, herds and flocks.

A place to sit, a place to lie down;  
Plenty of food and plenty of drink.

After that, an old man among old men;  
Respect on you and honour on you.

## LADY GREGORY

Head of the court, of the jury, of the meeting,  
And the counsellors not the worse for having you.

At the end of your days death, and then  
Hiding away; the boards and the church.

What are you better after tonight  
Than Ned the beggar or Seaghan the fool?

*(From the Irish of Douglas Hyde.)*

37

*Will you be as hard?*

**W**ILL you be as hard,  
Colleen, as you are quiet?  
Will you be without pity  
On me for ever?

Listen to me, Noireen,  
Listen, aroon;  
Put healing on me  
From your quiet mouth.

I am in the little road  
That is dark and narrow,  
The little road that has led  
Thousands to sleep.

*(From the Irish of Douglas Hyde.)*

38

*I am Ireland*

**I** AM Ireland,  
Older than the Hag of Beara.

Great my pride,  
I gave birth to brave Cuchulain.

## LADY GREGORY

Great my shame,  
My own children killed their mother.

I am Ireland,  
Lonelier than the Hag of Beara.

*(From the Irish of Padraig Pearse.)*

### 39 *A Poem written in Time of Trouble by an Irish Priest who had taken Orders in France*

**M**Y thoughts, my grief! are without strength  
My spirit is journeying towards death  
My eyes are as a frozen sea  
My tears my daily food;  
There is nothing in life but only misery.  
My poor heart is torn  
And my thoughts are sharp wounds within me,  
Mourning the miserable state of Ireland.

Misfortune has come upon us all together  
The poor, the rich, the weak and the strong  
The great lord by whom hundreds were maintained  
The powerful strong man, and the man that holds the plough;  
And the cross laid on the bare shoulder of every man.

Our feasts are without any voice of priests  
And none at them but women lamenting  
Tearing their hair with troubled minds  
Keening miserably after the Fenians.

The pipes of our organs are broken  
Our harps have lost their strings that were tuned  
That might have made the great lamentations of Ireland.

## LADY GREGORY

Until the strong men come back across the sea  
There is no help for us but bitter crying,  
Screams, and beating of hands, and calling out.

I do not know of anything under the sky  
That is friendly or favourable to the Gael  
But only the sea that our need brings us to,  
Or the wind that blows to the harbour  
The ship that is bearing us away from Ireland;  
And there is reason that these are reconciled with us,  
For we increase the sea with our tears  
And the wandering wind with our sighs.

*(From the Irish.)*

## OSCAR WILDE

1856-1900

### 40      *From 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol'*

HE did not wear his scarlet coat,  
For blood and wine are red,  
And blood and wine were on his hands  
When they found him with the dead,  
The poor dead woman whom he loved,  
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men  
In a suit of shabby grey;  
A cricket cap was on his head,  
And his step seemed light and gay;  
But I never saw a man who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

## OSCAR WILDE

I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every drifting cloud that went  
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,  
Within another ring,  
And was wondering if the man had done  
A great or little thing,  
When a voice behind me whispered low,  
*'That fellow's got to swing.'*

\* \* \* \*

Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard,  
In the suit of shabby grey:  
His cricket cap was on his head,  
And his step seemed light and gay,  
But I never saw a man who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every wandering cloud that trailed  
Its ravelled fleeces by.

He did not wring his hands, as do  
Those witless men who dare  
To try to rear the changeling Hope  
In the cave of black Despair:  
He only looked upon the sun,  
And drank the morning air.



## OSCAR WILDE

He did not wring his hands nor weep,  
Nor did he peek or pine,  
But he drank the air as though it held  
Some healthful anodyne;  
With open mouth he drank the sun  
As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain,  
Who tramped the other ring,  
Forgot if we ourselves had done  
A great or little thing,  
And watched with gaze of dull amaze  
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass  
With a step so light and gay,  
And strange it was to see him look  
So wistfully at the day,  
And strange it was to think that he  
Had such a debt to pay.

\* \* \* \*

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves  
That in the spring-time shoot:  
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,  
With its adder-bitten root,  
And, green or dry, a man must die  
Before it bears its fruit!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace  
For which all worldlings try:  
But who would stand in hempen band  
Upon a scaffold high,  
And through a murderer's collar take  
His last look at the sky?

## OSCAR WILDE

It is sweet to dance to violins  
When Love and Life are fair:  
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes  
Is delicate and rare:  
But it is not sweet with nimble feet  
To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise  
We watched him day by day,  
And wondered if each one of us  
Would end the self-same way,  
For none can tell to what red Hell  
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more  
Amongst the Trial Men,  
And I knew that he was standing up  
In the black dock's dreadful pen,  
And that never would I see his face  
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm  
We had crossed each other's way:  
But we made no sign, we said no word,  
We had no word to say;  
For we did not meet in the holy night,  
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,  
Two outcast men we were:  
The world had thrust us from its heart,  
And God from out His care:  
And the iron gin that waits for Sin  
Had caught us in its snare.

\* \* \* \*

## OSCAR WILDE

In Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,  
And the dripping wall is high,  
So it was there he took the air  
Beneath the leaden sky,  
And by each side a Warder walked,  
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched  
His anguish night and day;  
Who watched him when he rose to weep,  
And when he crouched to pray;  
Who watched him lest himself should rob  
Their scaffold of its prey.

\* \* \* \*

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,  
And drank his quart of beer:  
His soul was resolute, and held  
No hiding-place for fear;  
He often said that he was glad  
The hangman's hands were near.

But why he said so strange a thing  
No Warder dared to ask:  
For he to whom a watcher's doom  
Is given as his task,  
Must set a lock upon his lips,  
And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try  
To comfort or console:  
And what should Human Pity do  
Pent up in Murderers' Hole?  
What word of grace in such a place  
Could help a brother's soul?

## OSCAR WILDE

We tore the tarry rope to shreds  
With blunt and bleeding nails;  
We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,  
And cleaned the shining rails:  
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,  
And clattered with the pails.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,  
We turned the dusty drill:  
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,  
And sweated on the mill:  
But in the heart of every man  
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day  
Crawled like a weed-clogged wave:  
And we forgot the bitter lot  
That waits for fool and knave,  
Till once, as we tramped in from work,  
We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole  
Gaped for a living thing;  
The very mud cried out for blood  
To the thirsty asphalte ring:  
And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair  
Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent  
On Death and Dread and Doom:  
The hangman, with his little bag,  
Went shuffling through the gloom:  
And each man trembled as he crept  
Into his numbered tomb.

\* \* \* \*

## OSCAR WILDE

That night the empty corridors  
Were full of forms of Fear,  
And up and down the iron town  
Stole feet we could not hear,  
And through the bars that hide the stars  
White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams  
In a pleasant meadow-land,  
The watchers watched him as he slept,  
And could not understand  
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep  
With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep  
Who never yet have wept:  
So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave—  
That endless vigil kept,  
And through each brain on hands of pain  
Another's terror crept.

\* \* \*  
There is no chapel on the day  
On which they hang a man:  
The Chaplain's heart is far too sick,  
Or his face is far too wan,  
Or there is that written in his eyes  
Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,  
And then they rang the bell,  
And the Warders with their jingling keys  
Opened each listening cell,  
And down the iron stair we tramped,  
Each from his separate Hell.

## OSCAR WILDE

Out into God's sweet air we went,  
But not in wonted way,  
For this man's face was white with fear,  
And that man's face was gray,  
And I never saw sad men who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
We prisoners called the sky,  
And at every careless cloud that passed  
In happy freedom by.

The Warders strutted up and down,  
And kept their herd of brutes,  
Their uniforms were spick and span,  
And they wore their Sunday suits,  
But we knew the work they had been at,  
By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,  
There was no grave at all:  
Only a stretch of mud and sand  
By the hideous prison-wall,  
And a little heap of burning lime,  
That the man should have his pall.

For three long years they will not sow  
Or root or seedling there:  
For three long years the unblessed spot  
Will sterile be and bare,  
And look upon the wondering sky  
With unreproachful stare.

OSCAR WILDE

They think a murderer's heart would taint  
Each simple seed they sow.  
It is not true! God's kindly earth  
Is kindlier than men know,  
And the red rose would but blow more red,  
The white rose whiter blow.

THOMAS WILLIAM ROLLESTON

1857-1920

41

*Clonmacnoise*

**I**N a quiet water'd land, a land of roses,  
Stands Saint Kieran's city fair;  
And the warriors of Erin in their famous generations  
Slumber there.  
There beneath the dewy hillside sleep the noblest  
Of the clan of Conn,  
Each below his stone with name in branching Ogham  
And the sacred knot thereon.  
There they laid to rest the seven Kings of Tara,  
There the sons of Cairbrè sleep—  
Battle-banners of the Gael that in Kieran's plain of crosses  
Now their final hosting keep.  
And in Clonmacnoise they laid the men of Teffia,  
And right many a lord of Breagh;  
Deep the sod above Clan Creidè and Clan Conaill,  
Kind in hall and fierce in fray.  
Many and many a son of Conn the Hundred-fighter  
In the red earth lies at rest;  
Many a blue eye of Clan Colman the turf covers,  
Many a swan-white breast.

(*From the Irish of Angus O'Gillan.*)

42

*Grenadier*

THE Queen she sent to look for me,  
The sergeant he did say,  
'Young man, a soldier will you be  
For thirteen pence a day?'

For thirteen pence a day did I  
Take off the things I wore,  
And I have marched to where I lie,  
And I shall march no more.

My mouth is dry, my shirt is wet,  
My blood runs all away,  
So now I shall not die in debt  
For thirteen pence a day.

To-morrow after new young men  
The sergeant he must see,  
For things will all be over then  
Between the Queen and me.

And I shall have to bate my price,  
For in the grave, they say,  
Is neither knowledge nor device  
Nor thirteen pence a day.

43

*Soldier from the Wars returning*

SOLDIER from the wars returning,  
Spoiler of the taken town,  
Here is ease that asks not earning;  
Turn you in and sit you down.



ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN

Peace is come and wars are over,  
Welcome you and welcome all,  
While the charger crops the clover  
And his bridle hangs in stall.

Now no more of winters biting,  
Filth in trench from fall to spring,  
Summers full of sweat and fighting  
For the Kesar or the King.

Rest you, charger, rust you, bridle;  
Kings and kesars, keep your pay;  
Soldier, sit you down and idle  
At the inn of night for aye.

44      *The Chestnut casts his Flambeaux*

THE chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers  
Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,  
The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.  
Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May.

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot,  
One season ruined of our little store.  
May will be fine next year as like as not:  
Oh ay, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first  
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled  
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed  
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN

It is in truth iniquity on high  
To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,  
And mar the merriment as you and I  
Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.  
My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;  
Our only portion is the estate of man:  
We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

If here to-day the cloud of thunder lours  
To-morrow it will hie on far behests;  
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours  
Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust  
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.  
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.  
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

45

*Could man be drunk for ever*

COULD man be drunk for ever  
With liquor, love, or fights,  
Lief should I rouse at morning  
And lief lie down of nights.

But men at whiles are sober  
And think by fits and starts,  
And if they think, they fasten  
Their hands upon their hearts.

*The Deserter*

'WHAT sound awakened me, I wonder,  
For now 'tis dumb.'

'Wheels on the road most like, or thunder:  
Lie down; 'twas not the drum.'

Toil at sea and two in haven  
And trouble far:  
Fly, crow, away, and follow, raven,  
And all that croaks for war.

'Hark, I heard the bugle crying,  
And where am I?  
My friends are up and dressed and dying,  
And I will dress and die.'

'Oh love is rare and trouble plenty  
And carrion cheap,  
And daylight dear at four-and-twenty:  
Lie down again and sleep.'

'Reach me my belt and leave your prattle:  
Your hour is gone;  
But my day is the day of battle,  
And that comes dawning on.

'They mow the field of man in season:  
Farewell, my fair,  
And, call it truth or call it treason,  
Farewell the vows that were.'

'Ay, false heart, forsake me lightly;  
'Tis like the brave.  
They find no bed to joy in rightly  
Before they find the grave.

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN

'Their love is for their own undoing,  
And east and west  
They scour about the world a-wooing  
The bullet to their breast.

'Sail away the ocean over,  
Oh sail away,  
And lie there with your leaden lover  
For ever and a day.'

ERNEST RHYS

1859-1946

47

*The Song of the Graves*

**I**N graves where drips the winter rain,  
Lie those that loved me most of men:  
Cerwyd, Cywrid, Caw, lie slain.

In graves where the grass grows rank and tall,  
Lie, well avenged ere they did fall:  
Gwrien, Morien, Morial.

In graves where drips the rain, the dead  
Lie, that not lightly bowed the head:  
Gwrien, Gwen, and Gwried.

In Llan Beuno, where the sullen wave  
Sounds night and day, is Dylan's grave,  
In Bron Aren, Tydain the brave.

Where Corbre gives Tarw Torment space,  
By a grave-yard wall, in a ruined place,  
The stones hide Ceri Gledivor's face.

## ERNEST RHYS

Where the ninth wave flows in Perython,  
Is the grave of Gwalchmai, the peerless one:  
In Llanbadarn lies Clydno's son.

Seithenin's lost mind sleeps by the shore,  
Twixt Cinran and the grey sea's roar;  
Where Caer Cenedir starts up before.

After many a death, in cold Camlan  
Sleeps well the son of old Osvran:  
Bedwyr the Brave lies in Tryvan.

In Abererch lies Rhyther' Hael,  
Beneath the earth of Llan Morvael:  
But Owain ab Urien in lonelier soil.

Clad in umber and red, the spear at his side,  
With his shining horses he went in pride:  
From his grave in Llan Heled he cannot ride.

After wounds, and bloody plains and red;  
White horses to bear him, his helm on his head  
This, even this, is Cyndylan's bed.

Whose is the grave of the four square stones?  
Who lies there, of the mighty ones?  
Madawg the warrior, of Gwyneth's sons!

Mid the dreary moor, by the one oak-tree,  
The grave of stately Siawn may be:  
Stately, treacherous, and bitter was he!

Mid the salt sea-marsh, where the tides have been,  
Lie the sweet maid, Sanaw: the warrior, Rhyn;  
And Hennin's daughter, the pale Earwyn.

## ERNEST RHYS

Where's the grave of Beli, the bed of Braint?  
One's in the plain, and one in Llednaint;  
By Clewaint water lies Dehewaint.

In Ardudwy, I bid my grief  
Find the grave of Llia, the Gwythel chief,  
Under the grass and the withered leaf.

And this may the grave of Gwythur be;  
But who the world's great mystery,—  
The grave of Arthur shall ever see?

Three graves on Celvi's ridge are made;  
And there are Cynveli and Cynvael laid;  
The third holds rough-browed Cynon's head.

The long graves in Gwanas—none has told  
Their history—what men they hold,  
What deeds, and death, beneath their mould.

Of Oeth's and Anoeth's fame we know:  
Who seeks their kin, left naked now,  
To dig in Gwanas' graves may go.

*(From The Black Book of Carmarthen.)*

48

### *The Lament for Urien*

(1)

A HEAD I bear;—the Eagle of Gál,  
Whose wing once brushed the mountain wall;  
The Pillar of Prydain has come by a fall.

A head I bear by the side of my thigh:  
He was the shield of his own country:  
A wheel in battle; a sword borne high.

## ERNEST RHYS

The Pillar of Prydain is fallen down:  
Urien, Prince of our houses, is gone:  
His heart was a castle, a walléd town.

A head I bear and hold in my hand,  
That late was the Prince of Prydain's land,  
That harried the host, as the sea the strand.

A head I bear, from the Riw to the wood:  
His lips are closed on a foam of blood;  
Woe to Reged! Let Urien be rued!

### (ii)

The delicate white body will be buried to-day:  
The delicate white body, be hidden away  
Deep in the earth, and the stones, and the clay.

The delicate white body will be covered to-night,  
Under earth and blue stones, from the eye of light:  
The nettles shall cover it out of sight.

The delicate white body will be covered to-day,  
The tumulus be reared, the green sod give way:  
And there, oh Cynvarch, thy son they will lay.

The delicate white body will be covered to-night:  
Oh Eurdyl, be sad: no more thy delight,  
Thy brother shall rise from his sleep in might.

*(From The Red Book of Hergest.)*

*The Hound of Heaven*

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat—and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet—  
‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
Trellised with intertwining charities;  
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
Yet was I sore adread  
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);  
But, if one little casement parted wide,  
The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
Across the margent of the world I fled,  
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;



## FRANCIS THOMPSON

Fretted to dulcet jars  
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.  
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;  
    With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
        From this tremendous Lover—  
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
    I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy,  
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
    Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
    Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
        But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
    The long savannahs of the blue;  
        Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
    They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—  
    Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
        Still with unhurrying chase,  
        And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
    Came on the following Feet,  
    And a Voice above their beat—  
    'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
    In face of man or maid;  
But still within the little children's eyes  
    Seems something, something that replies,  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!  
I turned me to them very wistfully;  
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

FRANCIS THOMPSON

With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.  
'Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share  
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;  
Let me greet you lip to lip,  
Let me twine with you caresses,  
Wantoning  
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
Banqueting  
With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,  
From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'  
So it was done:  
*I* in their delicate fellowship was one—  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.  
*I* knew all the swift importings  
On the willful face of skies;  
*I* knew how the clouds arise  
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;  
All that 's born or dies  
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;  
With them joyed and was bereaven.  
*I* was heavy with the even,  
When she lit her glimmering tapers  
Round the day's dead sanctities.  
*I* laughed in the morning's eyes.  
*I* triumphed and *I* saddened with all weather,  
Heaven and *I* wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine.

## FRANCIS THOMPSON

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
    I laid my own to beat,  
    And share commingling heat;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.  
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.  
For ah! we know not what each other says,  
    These things and I; in sound *I* speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;  
    Let her, if she would owe me,  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
    The breasts o' her tenderness:  
Never did any milk of hers once bless  
    My thirsting mouth.  
    Nigh and nigh draws the chase,  
    With unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;  
    And past those noisèd Feet  
    A Voice comes yet more fleet—  
    'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
    And smitten me to my knee;  
    I am defenceless utterly.  
    I slept, methinks, and woke,  
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
    I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,  
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.

## FRANCIS THOMPSON

My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream  
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—  
Designer infinite!—  
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn  
with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;  
And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
From the dank thoughts that shiver  
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is; what is to be?  
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?  
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;  
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity;  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound  
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;  
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

## FRANCIS THOMPSON

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields  
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit  
Comes on at hand the bruit;  
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
‘And is thy earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I make much of naught’ (He said),  
‘And human love needs human meriting:  
How hast thou merited—  
Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might’st seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child’s mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!’

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
‘Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.’

FRANCIS THOMPSON

50

*From 'Sister Songs'*

**B**UT lo! at length the day is lingered out,  
At length my Ariel lays his viol by;  
We sing no more to thee, child, he and I;  
The day is lingered out:  
In slow wreaths folden  
Around yon censer, sphered, golden,  
Vague Vesper's fumes aspire;  
And glimmering to eclipse,  
The long laburnum drips  
Its honey of wild flame, its jocund splith of fire.

*Now pass your ways, fair bird, and pass your ways  
If you will;  
I have you through the days!  
And flit or hold you still,  
And perch you where you list  
On what wrist,—  
You are mine through the times!  
I have caught you fast for ever in a tangle of sweet rhymes.  
And in your young maiden morn  
You may scorn,  
But you must be  
Bound and sociate to me;  
With this thread from out the tomb my dead hand shall  
tether thee!*

FRANCIS THOMPSON

51

*The Heart (i)*

THE heart you hold too small and local thing  
Such spacious terms of edifice to bear.  
And yet, since Poesy first shook out her wing,  
The mighty Love has been impalaced there;  
That has she given him as his wide demesne,  
And for his sceptre ample empery;  
Against its door to knock has Beauty been  
Content; it has its purple canopy,  
A dais for the sovereign lady spread  
Of many a lover, who the heaven would think  
Too low an awning for her sacred head.  
The world, from star to sea, cast down its brink—  
Yet shall that chasm, till He Who these did build  
An awful Curtius make Him, yawn unfilled.

(ii)

O nothing, in this corporal earth of man,  
That to the imminent heaven of his high soul  
Responds with colour and with shadow, can  
Lack correlated greatness. If the scroll  
Where thoughts lie fast in spell of hieroglyph  
Be mighty through its mighty habitants;  
If God be in His Name; grave potency if  
The sounds unbind of hieratic chants;  
All's vast that vastness means. Nay, I affirm  
Nature is whole in her least things exprest,  
Nor know we with what scope God builds the worm.  
Our towns are copies fragments from our breast;  
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

*Our Lady*

MOTHER of God! no lady thou:  
Common woman of common earth  
*Our Lady* ladies call thee now;  
But Christ was never of gentle birth;  
A common man of the common earth.

For God's ways are not as our ways.  
The noblest lady in the land  
Would have given up half her days,  
Would have cut off her right hand,  
To bear the child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did He choose,  
Only a maid of low degree,  
So humble she might not refuse  
The carpenter of Galilee:  
A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.  
Never a lady so had sung.  
She knew no letters, had no art;  
To all mankind, in woman's tongue,  
Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,  
Nor shall her singing pass away.  
'*He hath fill'd the hungry with good things*'—  
Oh, listen, lords and ladies gay!—  
'*And the rich He hath sent empty away.*'



53

*Day after Day*

**D**AY after day, O lord of my life, shall I stand before thee face to face? With folded hands, O lord of all worlds, shall I stand before thee face to face?

Under thy great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before thee face to face?

In this laborious world of thine, tumultuous with toil and with struggle, among hurrying crowds shall I stand before thee face to face?

And when my work shall be done in this world, O King of kings, alone and speechless shall I stand before thee face to face?

54

*If it is not my Portion*

**I**F it is not my portion to meet thee in this my life then let me ever feel that I have missed thy sight—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

As my days pass in the crowded market of this world and my hands grow full with the daily profits, let me ever feel that I have gained nothing—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

When I sit by the roadside, tired and panting, when I spread my bed low in the dust, let me ever feel that the long journey is still before me—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

When my rooms have been decked out and the flutes sound and the laughter there is loud, let me ever feel that I have not invited thee to my house—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

### 55 *I have got my Leave*

**I** HAVE got my leave. Bid me farewell, my brothers! I bow to you all and take my departure.

Here I give back the keys of my door—and I give up all claims to my house. I only ask for last kind words from you.

We were neighbours for long, but I received more than I could give. Now the day has dawned and the lamp that lit my dark corner is out. A summons has come and I am ready for my journey.

### 56 *On the Slope of the Desolate River*

**O**N the slope of the desolate river among tall grasses I asked her, 'Maiden, where do you go shading your lamp with your mantle? My house is all dark and lonesome—lend me your light!' She raised her dark eyes for a moment and looked at my face through the dusk. 'I have come to the river,' she said, 'to float my lamp on the stream when the daylight wanes in the west.' I stood alone among tall grasses and watched the timid flame of her lamp uselessly drifting in the tide.

In the silence of gathering night I asked her, 'Maiden, your lights are all lit—then where do you go with your lamp? My house is all dark and lonesome,—lend me your light.' She raised her dark eyes on my face and stood for a moment doubtful. 'I have come,' she said at last, 'to dedicate my lamp to the sky.' I stood and watched her light uselessly burning in the void.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

In the moonless gloom of midnight I asked her, 'Maiden, what is your quest holding the lamp near your heart? My house is all dark and lonesome,—lend me your light.' She stopped for a minute and thought and gazed at my face in the dark. 'I have brought my light,' she said, 'to join the carnival of lamps.' I stood and watched her little lamp uselessly lost among lights.

### 57      *The Yellow Bird sings*

THE yellow bird sings in their tree and makes my heart dance with gladness.

We both live in the same village, and that is our one piece of joy.

Her pair of pet lambs come to graze in the shade of our garden trees.

If they stray into our barley field, I take them up in my arms.

The name of our village is Khanjanā, and Anjanā they call our river.

My name is known to all the village, and her name is Ranjanā.

Only one field lies between us.

Bees that have hived in our grove go to seek honey in theirs.

Flowers launched from their landing-stairs come floating by the stream where we bathe.

Baskets of dried *kusm* flowers come from their fields to our market.

The name of our village is Khanjanā, and Anjanā they call our river.

My name is known to all the village, and her name is Ranjanā.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The lane that winds to their house is fragrant in the spring with mango flowers.

When their linseed is ripe for harvest the hemp is in bloom in our field.

The stars that smile on their cottage send us the same twinkling look.

The rain that floods their tank makes glad our *kadam* forest.

The name of our village is Khanjanā, and Anjanā they call our river.

My name is known to all the village, and her name is Ranjanā.

### 58 *In the Dusky Path of a Dream*

**I**N the dusky path of a dream I went to seek the love who was mine in a former life.

Her house stood at the end of a desolate street.

In the evening breeze her pet peacock sat drowsing on its perch, and the pigeons were silent in their corner.

She set her lamp down by the portal and stood before me.

She raised her large eyes to my face and mutely asked, 'Are you well, my friend?'

I tried to answer, but our language had been lost and forgotten.

I thought and thought; our names would not come to my mind.

Tears shone in her eyes. She held up her right hand to me. I took it and stood silent.

One lamp had flickered in the evening breeze and died.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

59

### *Thou art the Sky*

**T**HOU art the sky and Thou art also the nest.  
O Thou Beautiful! how in the nest thy love embraceth  
the soul with sweet sounds and colour and fragrant  
odours!

Morning cometh there, bearing in her golden basket the  
wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.

And there cometh Evening, o'er lonely meadows deserted of  
the herds, by trackless ways, carrying in her golden  
pitcher cool draughts of peace from the ocean-calms of  
the west.

But where thine infinite sky spreadeth for the soul to take her  
flight, a stainless white radiance reigneth; wherein is  
neither day nor night, nor form nor colour, nor ever any  
word.

*(All these poems are from his own Bengali.)*

## SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

1862-1938

60

### *Drake's Drum*

**D**RAKE he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,  
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)

Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,

An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,

Wi' sailor-lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,

An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',

He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

## SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,  
    (Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,  
    An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,  
    Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;  
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,  
    An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long  
    ago.'

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,  
    (Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,  
    An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,  
    Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;  
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'  
    They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him  
    long ago!

## MICHAEL FIELD

Katharine Bradley 1846-1914  
Edith Cooper 1862-1913

### 61     *The Tragic Mary Queen of Scots. I*

AH me, if I grew sweet to man  
It was but as a rose that can  
No longer keep the breath that heaves  
And swells among its folded leaves.

The pressing fragrance would uncloze  
The flower, and I became a rose,  
That unimpeachable and fair  
Planted its sweetness in the air.

MICHAEL FIELD

No art I used men's love to draw;  
I lived but by my being's law,  
As roses are by heaven designed  
To bring the honey to the wind.

62      *The Tragic Mary Queen of Scots. II*

I COULD wish to be dead!  
Too quick with life were the tears I shed,  
Too sweet for tears is the life I led;  
And ah, too lonesome my marriage-bed!  
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead,  
For just a word that rings in my head;  
Too dear, too dear are the words he said,  
They must never be remembered.  
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead:  
The wish to be loved is all mis-read,  
And to love, one learns when one is wed,  
Is to suffer bitter shame; instead  
I could wish to be dead.

63      *Bury her at Even*

BURY her at even  
That the stars may shine  
Soon above her,  
And the dews of twilight cover:  
Bury her at even  
Ye that love her.

MICHAEL FIELD

Bury her at even  
In the wind's decline;  
Night receive her  
Where no noise can ever grieve her!  
Bury her at even,  
And then leave her!

64 *And on my Eyes Dark Sleep by Night*

*Ὀφθαλμοῖς δὲ μέλαις νυκτὸς ἄωρος.*

COME, dark-eyed Sleep, thou child of Night,  
Give me thy dreams, thy lies;  
Lead through the horny portal white  
The pleasure day denies.

O bring the kiss I could not take  
From lips that would not give  
Bring me the heart I could not break  
The bliss for which I live.

I care not if I slumber blest  
By fond delusion; nay,  
Put me on Phaon's lips to rest,  
And cheat the cruel day!

65 *Gold is the Son of Zeus: neither Moth  
nor Worm may gnaw It*

*Διὸς παῖς ὁ χρυσός  
κεῖνον οὐ σῆς οὐδὲ κίς δάπτει.*

Yea, gold is son of Zeus: no rust  
Its timeless light can stain;  
The worm that brings man's flesh to dust  
Assaults its strength in vain:  
More gold than gold the love I sing,  
A hard, inviolable thing.



MICHAEL FIELD

Men say the passions should grow old  
With waning years; my heart  
Is incorruptible as gold,  
'Tis my immortal part:  
Nor is there any god can lay  
On love the finger of decay.

66      *Sweeter Far than the Harp, More  
Gold than Gold*

Πολὺ πάκτιδος ἀδυμελεστέρα,  
χρυσῷ χρυσοτέρα.

Thine elder that I am, thou must not cling  
To me, nor mournful for my love entreat:  
And yet, Alcaeus, as the sudden spring  
Is love, yea, and to veiled Demeter sweet.

Sweeter than tone of harp, more gold than gold  
Is thy young voice to me; yet, ah, the pain  
To learn I am beloved now I am old,  
Who, in my youth, loved, as thou must, in vain.

67      *If They Honoured Me, Giving Me  
Their Gifts*

Αἱ με τιμᾶν ἐπόησαν ἔργα  
τὰ σφὰ δοῖσαι.

They bring me gifts, they honour me,  
Now I am growing old;  
And wondering youth crowds round my knee,  
As if I had a mystery  
And worship to unfold.

## MICHAEL FIELD

To me the tender, blushing bride  
Doth come with lips that fail;  
I feel her heart beat at my side  
And cry: 'Like Ares in his pride,  
Hail, noble bridegroom, hail!'

68

### *To The Lord Love*

*(At the approach of old age)*

I AM thy fugitive, thy votary,  
Nor even thy mother tempts me from thy shrine:  
Mirror, nor gold, nor ornament of mine  
Appease her: thou art all my gods to me,  
And I so breathless in my loyalty,  
Youth hath slipped by and left no footprint sign:  
Yet there are footsteps nigh. My years decline.  
Decline thy years? Burns thy torch duskily?  
Lord Love, to thy great altar I retire;  
Time doth pursue me, age is on my brow,  
And there are cries and shadows of the night.  
Transform me, for I cannot quit thee now:  
Love, thou hast weapons visionary, bright—  
Keep me perpetual in grace and fire!

69

### *Aridity*

O SOUL, canst thou not understand  
Thou art not left alone,  
As a dog to howl and moan  
His master's absence? Thou art as a book  
Left in a room that He forsook,

MICHAEL FIELD

But returns to by and by,  
A book of His dear choice,—  
That quiet waiteth for His Hand,  
That quiet waiteth for His Eye,  
That quiet waiteth for His Voice.

RUDYARD KIPLING

1865-1936

70

*A St. Helena Lullaby*

'HOW far is St. Helena from a little child at play?'  
What makes you want to wander there with all the  
world between?

Oh, Mother, call your son again or else he'll run away.  
(*No one thinks of winter when the grass is green!*)

'How far is St. Helena from a fight in Paris street?'  
I haven't time to answer now—the men are falling fast.  
The guns begin to thunder, and the drums begin to beat.  
(*If you take the first step, you will take the last!*)

'How far is St. Helena from the field of Austerlitz?'  
You couldn't hear me if I told—so loud the cannons roar.  
But not so far for people who are living by their wits.  
(*'Gay go up' means 'Gay do down' the wide world o'er!*)

'How far is St. Helena from an Emperor of France?'  
I cannot see—I cannot tell—the crowns they dazzle so.  
The Kings sit down to dinner, and the Queens stand up to  
dance.

(*After open weather you may look for snow!*)

## RUDYARD KIPLING

'How far is St. Helena from the Capes of Trafalgar?'  
A longish way—a longish way—with ten year more to run.  
It's South across the water underneath a falling star.  
(*What you cannot finish you must leave undone!*)

'How far is St. Helena from the Beresina ice?'  
An ill way—a chill way—the ice begins to crack.  
But not so far for gentlemen who never took advice.  
(*When you can't go forward you must e'en come back!*)

'How far is St. Helena from the field of Waterloo?'  
A near way—a clear way—the ship will take you soon.  
A pleasant place for gentlemen with little left to do.  
(*Morning never tries you till the afternoon!*)

'How far from St. Helena to the Gate of Heaven's Grace?'  
That no one knows—that no one knows—and no one ever  
will,  
But fold your hands across your heart and cover up your face,  
And after all your trapesings, child, lie still!

71

### *The Looking-glass*

(*A Country Dance*)

QUEEN Bess was Harry's daughter. Stand forward  
partners all!  
In ruff and stomacher and gown  
She danced King Philip down-a-down  
And left her shoe to show 'twas true—  
(*The very tune I'm playing you*)  
In Norgem at Brickwall!

## RUDYARD KIPLING

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was middling old.  
Her petticoat was satin, and her stomacher was gold.  
Backwards and forwards and sideways did she pass,  
Making up her mind to face the cruel looking-glass.  
The cruel looking-glass that will never show a lass  
As comely or as kindly as what she was!

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now hand your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, a-combing of her hair.  
There came Queen Mary's spirit and It stood behind her chair,  
Singing 'Backwards and forwards and sideways may you pass,  
But I will stand behind you till you face the looking-glass.  
The cruel looking-glass that will never show a lass  
As lovely or unlucky or as lonely as I was!'

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now turn your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, a-weeping very sore,  
There came Lord Leicester's spirit and It scratched upon the  
door,  
Singing 'Backwards and forwards and sideways may you pass,  
But I will walk beside you till you face the looking-glass.  
The cruel looking-glass that will never show a lass,  
As hard and unforgiving or as wicked as you was!'

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now kiss your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, her sins were on her head.  
She looked the spirits up and down and statelily she said:—  
'Backwards and forwards and sideways though I've been,  
Yet I am Harry's daughter and I am England's Queen!  
And she faced the looking-glass (and whatever else there was)  
And she saw her day was over and she saw her beauty pass  
In the cruel looking-glass, that can always hurt a lass  
More hard than any ghost there is or any man there was!

ARTHUR SYMONS

1865-1944

72

*Mandoline*

THE singers of serenades  
Whisper their fated vows  
Unto fair listening maids  
Under the singing boughs.

Tircis, Aminte, are there,  
Clitandre has waited long,  
And Damis for many a fair  
Tyrant makes many a song.

Their short vests, silken and bright,  
Their long pale silken trains,  
Their elegance of delight,  
Twine soft blue silken chains.

And the mandolines and they,  
Faintlier breathing, swoon  
Into the rose and grey  
Ecstasy of the moon.

*(From Paul Verlaine.)*

73

*Fantoches*

SCARAMOUCHE waves a threatening hand  
To Pulcinella, and they stand,  
Two shadows, black against the moon.

The old doctor of Bologna pries  
For simples with impassive eyes,  
And mutters o'er a magic rune.

76

ARTHUR SYMONS

The while his daughter, scarce half-dressed,  
Glides shyly 'neath the trees, in quest  
Of her bold pirate lover's sail;

Her pirate from the Spanish main,  
Whose passion thrills her in the pain  
Of the loud languorous nightingale.

*(From Paul Verlaine.)*

74

*The Obscure Night of the Soul*

UPON an obscure night,  
Fevered with love in love's anxiety,  
(O hapless-happy plight!)  
I went, none seeing me,  
Forth from my house where all things quiet be.

By night, secure from sight,  
And by the secret stair, disguisedly,  
(O hapless-happy plight!)  
By night, and privily,  
Forth from my house where all things quiet be.

Blest night of wandering,  
In secret, where by none might I be spied,  
Nor I see anything;  
Without a light or guide,  
Save that which in my heart burnt in my side.

That light did lead me on,  
More surely than the shining of noontide,  
Where well I knew that one  
Did for my coming bide;  
Where he abode might none but he abide.

## ARTHUR SYMONS

O night that didst lead thus,  
O night more lovely than the dawn of light,  
O night that broughtest us,  
Lover to lover's sight,  
Lover with loved in marriage of delight!

Upon my flowery breast,  
Wholly for him, and save himself for none,  
There did I give sweet rest  
To my beloved one;  
The fanning of the cedars breathed thereon.

When the first moving air  
Blew from the tower, and waved his locks aside,  
His hand, with gentle care,  
Did wound me in the side,  
And in my body all my senses died.

All things I then forgot,  
My cheek on him who for my coming came;  
All ceased and I was not,  
Leaving my cares and shame  
Among the lilies, and forgetting them.

*(From San Juan de la Cruz.)*

## HERBERT TRENCH

1865-1923

75

### *Jean Richepin's Song*

A POOR lad once and a lad so trim,  
Fol de rol de raly O!  
Fol de rol!

A poor lad once and a lad so trim  
Gave his love to her that loved not him.



## HERBERT TRENCH

And, says she, 'Fetch me to-night you rogue',  
Fol de rol de raly O!

Fol de rol!

And, says she, 'Fetch me to-night, you rogue,  
Your mother's heart to feed my dog!'

To his mother's house went that young man  
Fol de rol de raly O!

Fol de rol!

To his mother's house went that young man  
Killed her, and took the heart, and ran.

And as he was running, look you, he fell  
Fol de rol de raly O!

Fol de rol!

And as he was running, look you, he fell  
And the heart rolled on the ground as well.

And the lad, as the heart was a-rolling, heard  
(Fol de rol de raly O!  
Fol de rol!)

And the lad, as the heart was a-rolling, heard  
That the heart was speaking, and this was the word-

The heart was a-weeping, and crying so small  
(Fol de rol de raly O!  
Fol de rol!)

The heart was a-weeping, and crying so small  
'Are you hurt my child, are you hurt at all?'

76

*After Long Silence*

SPEECH after long silence; it is right,  
All other lovers being estranged or dead,  
Unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade,  
The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,  
That we descant and yet again descant  
Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song:  
Bodily decrepitude is wisdom; young  
We loved each other and were ignorant.

77

*Three Things*

'O CRUEL Death, give three things back,'  
*Sang a bone upon the shore;*  
'A child found all a child can lack,  
Whether of pleasure or of rest,  
Upon the abundance of my breast':  
*A bone wave-whitened and dried in the wind.*  
  
'Three dear things that women know,'  
*Sang a bone upon the shore;*  
'A man if I but held him so  
When my body was alive  
Found all the pleasure that life gave':  
*A bone wave-whitened and dried in the wind.*  
  
'The third thing that I think of yet,'  
*Sang a bone upon the shore;*  
'Is that morning when I met  
Face to face my rightful man  
And did after stretch and yawn':  
*A bone wave-whitened and dried in the wind.*

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

78

*Lullaby*

**B**ELOVED, may your sleep be sound  
That have found it where you fed.  
What were all the world's alarms  
To mighty Paris when he found  
Sleep upon a golden bed  
That first dawn in Helen's arms?

Sleep, beloved, such a sleep  
As did that wild Tristram know  
When, the potion's work being done,  
Roe could run or doe could leap  
Under oak and beechen bough,  
Roe could leap or doe could run;

Such a sleep and sound as fell  
Upon Eurotas' grassy bank  
When the holy bird, that there  
Accomplished his predestined will,  
From the limbs of Leda sank  
But not from her protecting care.

79

*Symbols*

**A** STORM-BEATEN old watch-tower,  
A blind hermit rings the hour.

All-destroying sword-blade still  
Carried by the wandering fool.

Gold-sewn silk on the sword-blade,  
Beauty and fool together laid.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

80

*From 'Vacillation'*

**M**UST we part, Von Hügel, though much alike, for we  
Accept the miracles of the saints and honour sanctity?  
The body of Saint Teresa lies undecayed in tomb,  
Bathed in miraculous oil, sweet odours from it come,  
Healing from its lettered slab. Those self-same hands per-  
chance  
Eternalized the body of a modern saint that once  
Had scooped out Pharaoh's mummy. I—though heart  
might find relief  
Did I become a Christian man and choose for my belief  
What seems most welcome in the tomb—play a predestined  
part.  
Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.  
The lion and the honeycomb, what has Scripture said?  
So get you gone, Von Hügel, though with blessings on your  
head.

81

*Sailing to Byzantium*

**T**HAT is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms; birds in the trees,  
—Those dying generations—at their song;  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long  
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.  
Caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unageing intellect.

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

82

*The Rose Tree*

'O WORDS are lightly spoken,'  
Said Pearse to Connolly,  
'Maybe a breath of politic words  
Has withered our Rose Tree;  
Or maybe but a wind that blows  
Across the bitter sea.'

'It needs to be but watered,'  
James Connolly replied,  
'To make the green come out again  
And spread on every side,  
And shake the blossom from the bud  
To be the garden's pride.'

'But where can we draw water,'  
Said Pearse to Connolly,  
'When all the wells are parched away?  
O plain as plain can be  
There's nothing but our own red blood  
Can make a right Rose Tree.'

83

*On a Political Prisoner*

SHE that but little patience knew,  
From childhood on, had now so much  
A grey gull lost its fear and flew  
Down to her cell and there alit,  
And there endured her fingers' touch  
And from her fingers ate its bit.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Did she in touching that lone wing  
Recall the years before her mind  
Became a bitter, an abstract thing,  
Her thought some popular enmity:  
Blind and leader of the blind  
Drinking the foul ditch where they lie?

When long ago I saw her ride  
Under Ben Bulbin to the meet,  
The beauty of her country-side  
With all youth's lonely wildness stirred,  
She seemed to have grown clean and sweet  
Like any rock-bred, sea-borne bird:

Sea-borne, or balanced on the air  
When first it sprang out of the nest  
Upon some lofty rock to stare  
Upon the cloudy canopy,  
While under its storm-beaten breast  
Cried out the hollows of the sea.

84 *In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con  
Markiewicz*

THE light of evening, Lissadell,  
Great windows open to the south,  
Two girls in silk kimonos, both  
Beautiful, one a gazelle.  
But a raving autumn shears  
Blossom from the summer's wreath;  
The older is condemned to death,  
Pardoned, drags out lonely years  
Conspiring among the ignorant.

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

I know not what the younger dreams—  
Some vague Utopia—and she seems,  
When withered old and skeleton-gaunt,  
An image of such politics.  
Many a time I think to seek  
One or the other out and speak  
Of that old Georgian mansion, mix  
Pictures of the mind, recall  
That table and the talk of youth,  
Two girls in silk kimonos, both  
Beautiful, one a gazelle.  
Dear shadows, now you know it all,  
All the folly of a fight  
With a common wrong or right.  
The innocent and the beautiful  
Have no enemy but time;  
Arise and bid me strike a match  
And strike another till time catch;  
Should the conflagration climb,  
Run till all the sages know.  
We the great gazebo built,  
They convicted us of guilt;  
Bid me strike a match and blow.

### 85     *To a Friend whose Work has come to Nothing*

NOW all the truth is out,  
Be secret and take defeat  
From any brazen throat,  
For how can you compete,



## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Being honour bred, with one  
Who, were it proved he lies,  
Were neither shamed in his own  
Nor in his neighbours' eyes?  
Bred to a harder thing  
Than Triumph, turn away  
And like a laughing string  
Whereon mad fingers play  
Amid a place of stone,  
Be secret and exult,  
Because of all things known  
That is most difficult.

### 86      *An Irish Airman foresees his Death*

I KNOW that I shall meet my fate  
Somewhere among the clouds above;  
Those that I fight I do not hate,  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
No likely end could bring them loss  
Or leave them happier than before.  
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,  
A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
A waste of breath the years behind  
In balance with this life, this death.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

87

*Coole Park, 1929*

**I** MEDITATE upon a swallow's flight,  
Upon an aged woman and her house,  
A sycamore and lime tree lost in night  
Although that western cloud is luminous,  
Great works constructed there in nature's spite  
For scholars and for poets after us,  
Thoughts long knitted into a single thought,  
A dance-like glory that those walls begot.

There Hyde before he had beaten into prose  
That noble blade the Muses buckled on,  
There one that ruffled in a manly pose  
For all his timid heart, there that slow man,  
That meditative man, John Synge, and those  
Impetuous men, Shaw Taylor and Hugh Lane,  
Found pride established in humility,  
A scene well set and excellent company.

They came like swallows and like swallows went,  
And yet a woman's powerful character  
Could keep a swallow to its first intent;  
And half a dozen in formation there,  
That seemed to whirl upon a compass-point,  
Found certainty upon the dreaming air,  
The intellectual sweetness of those lines  
That cut through time or cross it withershins.

Here, traveller, scholar, poet, take your stand  
When all those rooms and passages are gone,  
When nettles wave upon a shapeless mound  
And saplings root among the broken stone,

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

And dedicate—eyes bent upon the ground,  
Back turned upon the brightness of the sun  
And all the sensuality of the shade—  
A moment's memory to that laurelled head.

88

*Coole and Ballylee, 1931*

UNDER my window-ledge the waters race,  
Otters below and moor-hens on the top,  
Run for a mile undimmed in Heaven's face  
Then darkening through 'dark' Raftery's 'cellar' drop,  
Run underground, rise in a rocky place  
In Coole demesne, and there to finish up  
Spread to a lake and drop into a hole.  
What's water but the generated soul?

Upon the border of that lake's a wood  
Now all dry sticks under a wintry sun,  
And in a copse of beeches there I stood,  
For Nature'd pulled her tragic buskin on  
And all the rant a mirror of my mood:  
At sudden thunder of the mounting swan  
I turned about and looked where branches broke  
The glittering reaches of the flooded lake.

Another emblem there! That stormy white  
But seems a concentration of the sky;  
And, like the soul, it sails into the sight  
And in the morning's gone, no man knows why;  
And is so lovely that it sets to right  
What knowledge or its lack has set awry,  
So arrogantly pure, a child might think  
It can be murdered with a spot of ink.

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Sound of a stick upon the floor, a sound  
From somebody that toils from chair to chair;  
Beloved books that famous hands have bound,  
Old marble heads, old pictures everywhere;  
Great rooms where travelled men and children found  
Content or joy; a last inheritor  
Where none has reigned that lacked a name and fame  
Or out of folly into folly came.

A spot whereon the founders lived and died  
Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees,  
Or gardens rich in memory glorified  
Marriages, alliances and families,  
And every bride's ambition satisfied.  
Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees  
Man shifts about—all that great glory spent—  
Like some poor Arab tribesman and his tent.

We were the last romantics—chose for theme  
Traditional sanctity and loveliness;  
Whatever's written in what poets name  
The book of the people; whatever most can bless  
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme;  
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,  
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode  
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.

89

*From 'Oedipus at Colonus'*

**E**NDURE what life God gives and ask no longer span;  
Cease to remember the delights of youth, travel-wearied  
aged man;  
Delight becomes death-longing if all longing else be vain.

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Even from that delight memory treasures so,  
Death, despair, division of families, all entanglements of man-  
kind grow,  
As that old wandering beggar and these God-hated children  
know.

In the long echoing street the laughing dancers throng,  
The bride is carried to the bridegroom's chamber through  
torchlight and tumultuous song;  
I celebrate the silent kiss that ends short life or long.

Never to have lived is best, ancient writers say;  
Never to have drawn the breath of life, never to have looked  
into the eye of day;  
The second best 's a gay goodnight and quickly turn away.

## ERNEST DOWSON

1867-1900

### 90 *Villanelle of the Poet's Road*

WINE and woman and song,  
Three things garnish our way:  
Yet is day over long.

Lest we do our youth wrong,  
Gather them while we may:  
Wine and woman and song.

Three things render us strong,  
Vine leaves, kisses and bay;  
Yet is day over long.

Unto us they belong,  
Us the bitter and gay,  
Wine and woman and song.

ERNEST DOWSON

We, as we pass along,  
Are sad that they will not stay;  
Yet is day over long.

Fruits and flowers among,  
What is better than they:  
Wine and woman and song?  
Yet is day over long.

91     *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno  
         Cynarae*

LAST night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine  
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed  
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;  
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,  
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;  
Surely the kisses of her bright red mouth were sweet;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,  
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,  
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

## ERNEST DOWSON

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,  
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,  
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;  
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea hungry for the lips of my desire:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

92

### *Flos Lunae*

I WOULD not alter thy cold eyes,  
Nor trouble the calm fount of speech  
With aught of passion or surprise.  
The heart of thee I cannot reach:  
I would not alter thy cold eyes!

I would not alter thy cold eyes;  
Nor have thee smile, nor make thee weep:  
Though all my life droops down and dies,  
Desiring thee, desiring sleep,  
I would not alter thy cold eyes.

I would not alter thy cold eyes;  
I would not change thee if I might,  
To whom my prayers for incense rise,  
Daughter of dreams! my moon of night!  
I would not alter thy cold eyes.

I would not alter thy cold eyes,  
With trouble of the human heart:  
Within their glance my spirit lies,  
A frozen thing, alone, apart;  
I would not alter thy cold eyes.

ERNEST DOWSON

93

*Exchanges*

ALL that I had I brought,  
Little enough I know;  
A poor rhyme roughly wrought,  
A rose to match thy snow:  
All that I had I brought.

Little enough I sought:  
But a word compassionate,  
A passing glance, or thought,  
For me outside the gate:  
Little enough I sought.

Little enough I found:  
All that you had, perchance!  
With the dead leaves on the ground,  
I dance the devil's dance.  
All that you had I found.

94 *O mors! quam amara est memoria tua  
homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis*

EXCEEDING sorrow  
Consumeth my sad heart!  
Because to-morrow  
We must depart,  
Now is exceeding sorrow  
All my part!



## ERNEST DOWSON

Give over playing,  
Cast thy viol away:  
Merely laying  
Thine head my way:  
Prithee, give over playing,  
Grave or gay.

Be no word spoken;  
Weep nothing: let a pale  
Silence, unbroken  
Silence prevail!  
Prithee, be no word spoken,  
Lest I fail!

Forget to-morrow!  
Weep nothing: only lay  
In silent sorrow  
Thine head my way:  
Let us forget to-morrow,  
This one day!

95

### *Vesperal*

**S**TRANGE grows the river on the sunless evenings!  
The river comforts me, grown spectral, vague and dumb:  
Long was the day; at last the consoling shadows come:  
*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*

Labour and longing and despair the long day brings;  
Patient till evening men watch the sun go west;  
Deferred, expected night at last brings sleep and rest:  
*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*

## ERNEST DOWSON

At last the tranquil Angelus of evening rings  
Night's curtain down for comfort and oblivion  
Of all the vanities observed by the sun:  
*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*

So, some time, when the last of all our evenings  
Crowneth memorially the last of all our days,  
Not loth to take his poppies man goes down and says,  
'Sufficient for the day were the day's evil things!'

96

### *Dregs*

THE fire is out, and spent the warmth thereof,  
(This is the end of every song man sings!)

The golden wine is drunk, the dregs remain,  
Bitter as wormwood and as salt as pain;  
And health and hope have gone the way of love  
Into the drear oblivion of lost things.  
Ghosts go along with us until the end;  
This was a mistress, this, perhaps, a friend.  
With pale, indifferent eyes, we sit and wait  
For the dropt curtain and the closing gate:  
This is the end of all the songs man sings.

97

### *To One in Bedlam*

WITH delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,  
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;  
Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line  
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares,  
Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars  
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine  
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,  
And make his melancholy germane to the stars?

ERNEST DOWSON

O lamentable brother ! if those pity thee,  
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;  
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap.  
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,  
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,  
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!

98

*Extreme Unction*

UPON the eyes, the lips, the feet,  
On all the passages of sense,  
The atoning oil is spread with sweet  
Renewal of lost innocence.

The feet, that lately ran so fast  
To meet desire, are soothly sealed;  
The eyes, that were so often cast  
On vanity, are touched and healed.

From troublous sights and sounds set free;  
In such a twilight hour of breath,  
Shall one retrace his life, or see,  
Through shadows, the true face of death?

Vials of mercy! Sacring oils!  
I know not where nor when I come,  
Nor through what wanderings and toils,  
To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,  
In such an hour, it well may be,  
Through mist and darkness, light will break,  
And each anointed sense will see.

*The King's Son*

WHO rideth through the driving rain  
At such a headlong speed?  
Naked and pale he rides amain  
Upon a naked steed.

Nor hollow nor height his going bars,  
His wet steed shines like silk,  
His head is golden to the stars  
And his limbs are white as milk.

But, lo, he dwindles as a light  
That lifts from a black mere,  
And, as the fair youth wanes from sight,  
The steed grows mightier.

What wizard by yon holy tree  
Mutters unto the sky  
Where Macha's flame-tongued horses flee  
On hooves of thunder by?

Ah, 'tis not holy so to ban  
The youth of kingly seed:  
Ah! woe, the wasting of a man  
Who changes to a steed.

Nightly upon the Plain of Kings  
When Macha's day is nigh  
He gallops; and the dark wind brings  
His lonely human cry.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

1867-1935

100

*Reconciliation*

I BEGIN through the grass once again to be bound to the  
Lord;

I can see, through a face that has faded, the face full of rest  
Of the earth, of the mother, my heart with her heart in  
accord,

As I lie 'mid the cool green tresses that mantle her breast  
I begin with the grass once again to be bound to the Lord.

By the hand of a child I am led to the throne of the King

For a touch that now fevers me not is forgotten and far,  
And His infinite sceptred hands that sway us can bring

Me in dreams from the laugh of a child to the song of  
a star.

On the laugh of a child I am borne to the joy of the King.

101

*Immortality*

WE must pass like smoke or live within the spirit's fire;  
For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return  
If our thought has changed to dream, our will unto desire,  
As smoke we vanish though the fire may burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the grey dusk of our days:

Surely here is soul: with it we have eternal breath:

In the fire of love we live, or pass by many ways,

By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

102

*Desire*

WITH Thee a moment! Then what dreams have play!  
Traditions of eternal toil arise,  
Search for the high, austere and lonely way  
The Spirit moves in through eternities.  
Ah, in the soul what memories arise!

And with what yearning inexpressible,  
Rising from long forgetfulness I turn  
To Thee, invisible, unrumoured, still:  
White for Thy whiteness all desires burn.  
Ah, with what longing once again I turn!

103

*The Great Breath*

ITS edges foamed with amethyst and rose,  
Withers once more the old blue flower of day:  
There where the ether like a diamond glows  
Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air;  
Sparkle the delicate dews, the distant snows;  
The great deep thrills, for through it everywhere  
The breath of Beauty blows.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,  
Moulded to her by deep and deeper breath,  
Neared to the hour when Beauty breathes her last  
And knows herself in death.

*The Gay*

THOSE moon-gilded dancers  
Prankt like butterflies,  
Theirs was such lovely folly  
It stayed my rapt eyes:  
But my heart that was pondering  
Was sadly wise.

To be so lighthearted  
What pain was left behind;  
What fetters fallen gave them  
Unto this airy mind:  
What dark sins were pardoned;  
What God was kind!

I with long anguish bought  
Joy that was soon in flight;  
And wondered what these paid  
For years of young delight;  
Ere they were born what tears  
Through what long night.

All these gay cheeks, light feet,  
Were telling over again,  
But in a heavenly accent,  
A tale of ancient pain  
That, the joy spent, must pass  
To sorrow again.

I went into the wilderness  
Of night to be alone,

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

Holding sorrow and joy  
Hugged to my heart as one,  
Lest they fly on those wild ways  
And life be undone.

105

*The Cities*

THEY shall sink under water,  
They shall rise up again:  
They shall be peopled  
By millions of men.

Cleansed of their scarlet,  
Absolved of their sin,  
They shall be like crystal  
All stainless within.

Paris and Babel,  
London and Tyre,  
Reborn from the darkness,  
Shall sparkle like fire.

From the folk who throng in  
Their gardens and towers  
Shall be blown fragrance  
Sweeter than flowers.

Faery shall dance in  
The streets of the town,  
And from sky headlands  
The gods looking down.



GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

106

*New York*

WITH these heaven-assailing spires  
All that was in clay or stone  
Fabled of rich Babylon  
By these children is outdone.

Earth has spilt her fire in these  
To make them of her mightier kind;  
Has she that precious fire to give,  
The starry-pointing Magian mind,

That soared from the Chaldean plains  
Through zones of mystic air, and found  
The Master of the Zodiac,  
The Will that makes the Wheel go round?

107

*Germinal*

CALL not thy wanderer home as yet  
Though it be late.  
Now is his first assailing of  
The invisible gate.  
Be still through that light knocking. The hour  
Is thronged with fate.

To that first tapping at the invisible door  
Fate answereth.  
What shining image or voice, what sigh  
Or honied breath,  
Comes forth, shall be the master of life  
Even to death.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

Satyrs may follow after. Seraphs  
On crystal wing  
May blaze. But the delicate first comer  
It shall be King.  
They shall obey, even the mightiest,  
That gentle thing.

All the strong powers of Dante were bowed  
To a child's mild eyes,  
That wrought within him that travail  
From depths up to skies,  
Inferno, Purgatorio  
And Paradise.

Amid the soul's grave councillors  
A petulant boy  
Laughs under the laurels and purples, the elf  
Who snatched at his joy,  
Ordering Caesar's legions to bring him  
The world for his toy.

In ancient shadows and twilights  
Where childhood had strayed,  
The world's great sorrows were born  
And its heroes were made.  
In the lost boyhood of Judas  
Christ was betrayed.

Let thy young wanderer dream on:  
Call him not home.  
A door opens, a breath, a voice  
From the ancient room,  
Speaks to him now. Be it dark or bright  
He is knit with his doom.

LIONEL JOHNSON

1867-1902

108

*The Dark Angel*

**D**ARK Angel, with thine aching lust  
To rid the world of penitence:  
Malicious Angel, who still dost  
My soul such subtile violence!

Because of thee, no thought, no thing  
Abides for me undesecrate:  
Dark Angel, ever on the wing,  
Who never reachest me too late!

When music sounds, then changest thou  
Its silvery to a sultry fire:  
Nor will thine envious heart allow  
Delight untortured by desire.

Through thee, the gracious Muses turn  
To Furies, O mine Enemy!  
And all the things of beauty burn  
With flames of evil ecstasy.

Because of thee, the land of dreams  
Becomes a gathering-place of fears:  
Until tormented slumber seems  
One vehemence of useless tears.

When sunlight glows upon the flowers,  
Or ripples down the dancing sea:  
Thou, with thy troop of passionate powers,  
Beleaguerest, bewilderest me.

## LIONEL JOHNSON

Within the breath of autumn woods,  
Within the winter silences:  
Thy venomous spirit stirs and broods,  
O Master of impieties!

The ardour of red flame is thine,  
And thine the steely soul of ice:  
Thou poisonest the fair design  
Of nature, with unfair device.

Apples of ashes, golden bright;  
Waters of bitterness, how sweet!  
O banquet of a foul delight,  
Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete.

Thou art the whisper in the gloom,  
The hinting tone, the haunting laugh:  
Thou art the adorer of my tomb,  
The minstrel of mine epitaph.

I fight thee, in the Holy Name!  
Yet, what thou dost, is what God saith:  
Tempter! should I escape thy flame,  
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death:

The second Death, that never dies,  
That cannot die, when time is dead:  
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,  
Eternally uncomforted.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust!  
Of two defeats, of two despairs:  
Less dread, a change to drifting dust,  
Than thine eternity of cares.

## LIONEL JOHNSON

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,  
Dark Angel! triumph over me:  
*Lonely, unto the Lone I go;*  
*Divine, to the Divinity.*

### 109                      *The Age of a Dream*

**I**MAGERIES of dreams reveal a gracious age:  
Black armour, falling lace, and altar lights at morn.  
The courtesy of Saints, their gentleness and scorn,  
Lights on an earth more fair, than shone from Plato's page:  
The courtesy of knights, fair calm and sacred rage:  
The courtesy of love, sorrow for love's sake borne.  
Vanished, those high conceits! Desolate and forlorn,  
We hunger against hope for that lost heritage.

Gone now, the carven work! Ruined, the golden shrine!  
No more the glorious organs pour their voice divine;  
No more rich frankincense drifts through the Holy Place:  
Now from the broken tower, what solemn bell still tolls,  
Mourning what piteous death? Answer, O saddened souls!  
Who mourn the death of beauty and the death of grace.

### 110                      *The Church of a Dream*

**S**ADLY the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,  
Around the weather-worn, grey church, low down the vale:  
The Saints in golden vesture shake before the gale;  
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell enshrined;  
Old Saints by long-dead, shrivelled hands, long since designed:  
There still, although the world autumnal be, and pale,  
Still in their golden vesture the old Saints prevail;  
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.

## LIONEL JOHNSON

Only one ancient Priest offers the Sacrifice,  
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:  
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of spice,  
In gray, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds mystical:  
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice  
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.

### III *Te Martyrum Candidatus*

AH, see the fair chivalry come, the companions of Christ!  
White Horsemen, who ride on white horses, the  
Knights of God!

They, for their Lord and their Lover who sacrificed  
All, save the sweetness of treading, where He first trod!

These, through the darkness of death, the dominion of night,  
Swept, and they woke in white places at morning tide:  
They saw with their eyes, and sang for joy of the sight,  
They saw with their eyes the Eyes of the Crucified.

Now, whithersoever He goeth, with Him they go:  
White Horsemen, who ride on white horses, oh, fair to see  
They ride, where the Rivers of Paradise flash and flow,  
White Horsemen, with Christ their Captain: for ever He!

### II 2 *To Morfydd*

A VOICE on the winds,  
A voice by the waters,  
Wanders and cries:  
*Oh! what are the winds?*  
*And what are the waters?*  
*Mine are your eyes!*

LIONEL JOHNSON

Western the winds are,  
And western the waters,  
Where the light lies:  
*Oh! what are the winds?*  
*And what are the waters?*  
*Mine are your eyes!*

Cold, cold, grow the winds,  
And wild grow the waters,  
Where the sun dies:  
*Oh! what are the winds?*  
*And what are the waters?*  
*Mine are your eyes!*

And down the night winds,  
And down the night waters,  
The music flies:  
*Oh! what are the winds?*  
*And what are the waters?*  
*Cold be the winds,*  
*And wild be the waters,*  
*So mine be your eyes!*

113      *By the Statue of King Charles at  
Charing Cross*

SOMBRE and rich, the skies;  
Great glooms, and starry plains.  
Gently the night wind sighs;  
Else a vast silence reigns.

## LIONEL JOHNSON

The splendid silence clings  
Around me: and around  
The saddest of all kings  
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides  
Hard by his own Whitehall:  
Only the night wind glides:  
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court: and yet,  
The stars his courtiers are:  
Stars in their stations set;  
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,  
The fair and fatal king:  
Dark night is all his own,  
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:  
The stars; or those sad eyes?  
Which are more still and great:  
Those brows; or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn  
In passionate tragedy:  
Never was face so stern  
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death  
By beauty made amends:  
The passing of his breath  
Won his defeated ends.



## LIONEL JOHNSON

Brief life, and hapless? Nay:  
Through death, life grew sublime.  
*Speak after sentence?* Yea:  
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head  
Bare to the stars of doom:  
He triumphs now, the dead,  
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,  
Vexed in the world's employ:  
His soul was of the saints;  
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!  
Men hunger for thy grace:  
And through the night I go,  
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps;  
When all the cries are still:  
The stars and heavenly deeps  
Work out a perfect will.

## LAURENCE BINYON

1869-1943

114

### *Tristram's End*

(1)

TRISTRAM lies sick to death;  
Dulled is his kingly eye,  
Listless his famed right arm: earth-weary breath  
Hath force alone to sigh  
The one name that re-kindles life's low flame,

## LAURENCE BINYON

Isoult!—And thou, fair moon of Tristram's eve,  
Who with that many-memored name didst take  
A glory for the sake  
Of her who shone the sole light of his days and deeds,  
Thou canst no more relieve  
This heart that inly bleeds  
With all thy love, with all thy tender lore,  
No, nor thy white hands soothe him any more.  
Still, the day long, she hears  
Kind words that are more sharp to her than spears.  
Ah, loved he more, he had not been so kind!  
And still with pricking tears  
She watches him, and still must seem resigned;  
Though well she knows what face his eyes require,  
And jealous pangs, like coiled snakes in her mind,  
Cling tighter, as that voice more earnestly  
Asks heavy with desire  
From out that passionate past which is not hers,  
'Sweet wife, is there no sail upon the sea?'

Tenderest hearts by pain grow oft the bitterest,  
And haste to wound the thing they love the best.  
At evening, at sun-set, to Tristram's bed  
News on her lips she brings!  
She comes with eyes bright in divining dread,  
Hardening her anguished heart she bends above his head.  
'O Tristram!'—How her low voice strangely rings!—  
'There comes a ship, ah, rise not, turn not pale.  
I know not what this means, it is a sail  
Black, black as night!' She shot her word, and fled.  
But Tristram cried  
With a great cry, and rose upon his side.

## LAURENCE BINYON

'It cannot be, it cannot, shall not be!  
I will not die until mine own eyes see.'  
Despair, more strong than hope, lifts his weak limbs;  
He stands and draws deep effort from his breath,  
He trembles, his gaze swims,  
He gropes his steps in pain,  
Nigh fainting, till he gain  
Salt air and brightness from the outer door  
That opens on the cliff-built bastion floor  
And the wide ocean gleaming far beneath.  
He gazes, his lips part,  
And all the blood pours back upon his heart.

Close thine eyes, Tristram, lest joy blind thee quite!  
So swift a splendour burns away thy doubt.  
Nay, Tristram, gaze, gaze, lest bright Truth go out  
Ere she hath briefly shone.  
White, dazzling white,  
A sail swells onward, filling all his sight  
With snowy light!  
As on a gull's sure wing the ship comes on;  
She towers upon the wave, she speeds for home.  
Tristram on either doorpost must sustain  
His arms for strength to gaze his fill again.  
She shivers off the wind; the shining foam  
Bursts from her pitching prow,  
The sail drops as she nears,  
Poised on the joyous swell; and Tristram sees  
The mariners upon the deck; he hears  
Their eager cries: the breeze  
Blows a blue cloak; and now  
Like magic brought to his divining ears,

## LAURENCE BINYON

A voice, that empties all the earth and sky,  
Comes clear across the water, 'It is I!'

Isoult is come! Victorious saints above,  
Who suffered anguish ere to bliss you died,  
Have pity on him whom Love so sore hath tried,  
Who sinned yet greatly suffered for his love.  
That dear renounced love when now he sees,  
Heavy with joy, he sinks upon his knees.  
O had she wings to lift her to his side!  
But she is far below  
Where the spray breaks upon the rusted rail  
And rock-hewn steps, and there  
Stands gazing up, and lo!  
Tristram, how faint and pale!  
A pity overcomes her like despair.  
How shall her strength avail  
To conquer that steep stair,  
Dark, terrible, and ignorant as Time,  
Up which her feet must climb  
To Tristram? His outstretching arms are fain  
To help her, yet are helpless; and his pain  
Is hers, and her pain Tristram's; with long sighs  
She mounts, then halts again,  
Till she have drawn strength from his love-dimmed eyes:  
But when that wasted face anew she sees,  
Despair anew subdues her knees:  
She fails, yet still she mounts by sad degrees,  
With all her soul into her gaze upcast,  
Until at last, at last . . .  
What tears are like the wondering tears  
Of that entranced embrace,

LAURENCE BINYON

When out of desolate and divided years  
Face meets belovèd face?  
What cry most exquisite of grief or bliss  
The too full heart shall tell,  
When the new-recovered kiss  
Is the kiss of last farewell?

(ii)

*Isoult*

O Tristram, is this true?  
Is it thou I see  
With my own eyes, clasp in my arms? I knew,  
I knew that this must be.  
Thou couldst not suffer so,  
And I not feel the smart,  
Far, far away. But oh,  
How pale, my love, thou art!

*Tristram*

'Tis I, Isoult, 'tis I  
That thee enfold.  
I have seen thee, my own life, and yet I die.  
O for my strength of old!  
O that thy love could heal  
This wound that conquers me!  
But the night is come, I feel,  
And the last sun set for me.

*Isoult*

Tristram, 'twas I that healed thy hurt,  
That old, fierce wound of Morolt's poisoned sword.  
Stricken to death, pale, pale as now thou wert:  
Yet was thy strength restored.

## LAURENCE BINYON

Have I forgot my skill?  
This wound shall yet be healed.  
Love shall be master still,  
And Death again shall yield !

### *Tristram*

Isoult, if Time could bring me back  
That eve, that first eve, and that Irish shore,  
Then should I fear not, no nor nothing lack,  
And life were mine once more.  
But now too late thou art come;  
Too long we have dwelt apart;  
I have pined in an alien home:  
This new joy bursts my heart.

### *Isoult*

Hark, Tristram, to the breaking sea!  
So sounded the dim waves, at such an hour  
On such an eve, when thy voice came to me  
First in my father's tower.  
I heard thy sad harp from the shore beneath,  
It stirred my soul from sleep.  
Then it was bliss to breathe;  
But now, but now, I weep.

### *Tristram*

Shipwrecked, without hope, without friend, alone  
On a strange shore, stricken with pang on pang,  
I stood sad-hearted by that tower unknown,  
Yet soon for joy I sang.

## LAURENCE BINYON

For could I see thee and on death believe?  
Ah, glad would I die to attain  
The beat of my heart, that eve,  
And the song in my mouth again!

### *Isoult*

Young was I then and fair,  
Thou too wast fair and young;  
How comely the brown hair  
Down on thy shoulder hung!  
O Tristram, all grows dark as then it grew,  
But still I see thee on that surge-beat shore;  
Thou camest, and all was new  
And changed for evermore.

### *Tristram*

Isoult, dost thou regret?  
Behold my wasted cheek.  
With salt tears it is wet,  
My arms how faint, how weak!  
And thou, since that far day, what hast thou seen  
Save strife, and tears, and failure, and dismay?  
Had that hour never been,  
Peace had been thine, this day.

### *Isoult*

Look, Tristram, in my eyes!  
My own love, I could feed  
Life well with miseries  
So thou wert mine indeed.

## LAURENCE BINYON

Proud were the tears I wept;  
That day, that hour I bless,  
Nor would for peace accept  
One single pain the less.

### *Tristram*

Isoult, my heart is rent.  
What pangs our bliss hath bought!  
Only joy we meant,  
Yet woe and wrong we have wrought.  
I vowed a vow in the dark,  
And thee, who wert mine, I gave  
For a word's sake, to King Mark!  
Words, words have digged our grave.

### *Isoult*

Tristram, despite thy love,  
King Mark had yet thine oath.  
Ah, surely thy heart strove  
How to be true to both.  
Blame not thyself! for woe  
'Twixt us was doomed to be.  
One only thing I know;  
Thou hast been true to me.

### *Tristram*

Accurst be still that day,  
When lightly I vowed the king  
Whatever he might pray  
Home to his hands I'd bring!



## LAURENCE BINYON

Thee, thee he asked ! And I  
Who never feared man's sword,  
Yielded my life to a lie,  
To save the truth of a word.

### *Isoult*

Think not of that day, think  
Of the day when our lips desired,  
Unknowing, that cup to drink !  
The cup with a charm was fired  
From thee to beguile my love:  
But now in my soul it shall burn  
For ever, nor turn, nor remove,  
Till the sun in his course shall turn.

### *Tristram*

Or ever that draught we drank,  
Thy heart, Isoult, was mine,  
My heart was thine. I thank  
God's grace, no wizard wine,  
No stealth of a drop distilled  
By a spell in the night, no art,  
No charm, could have ever filled  
With aught but thee my heart.

### *Isoult*

When last we said farewell,  
Remember how we dreamed  
Wild love to have learned to quell;  
Our hearts grown wise we deemed.

## LAURENCE BINYON

Tender, parted friends  
We vowed to be; but the will  
Of Love meant other ends.  
Words fool us, Tristram, still.

### *Tristram*

Not now, Isoult, not now!  
I am thine while I have breath.  
Words part us not, nor vow—  
No, nor King Mark, but death.  
I hold thee to my breast.  
Our sins, our woes are past;  
Thy lips were the first I prest,  
Thou art mine, thou art mine at the last!

### *Isoult*

O Tristram, all grows old,  
Enfold me closer yet!  
The night grows vast and cold,  
And the dew on thy hair falls wet.  
And never shall Time rebuild  
The places of our delight;  
Those towers and gardens are filled  
With emptiness now, and night!

### *Tristram*

Isoult, let it all be a dream,  
The days and the deeds, let them be  
As the bough that I cast on the stream  
And that lived but to bring thee to me;

## LAURENCE BINYON

As the leaves that I broke from the bough  
To float by thy window, and say  
That I waited thy coming—O now  
Thou art come, let the world be as they!

### *Isolt*

How dark is the strong waves' sound!  
Tristram, they fill me with fear!  
We two are but spent waves, drowned  
In the coming of year upon year.  
Long dead are our friends and our foes,  
Old Rual, Brangian, all  
That helped us, or wrought us woes;  
And we, the last, we fall.

### *Tristram*

God and his great saints guard  
True friends that loved us well,  
And all false foes be barred  
In the fiery gates of hell.  
But broken be all those towers,  
And sunken be all those ships!  
Shut out those old, dead hours;  
Life, life, is on thy lips!

### *Isolt*

Tristram, my soul is afraid!

### *Tristram*

Isolt, Isolt, thy kiss!  
To sorrow though I was made,  
I die in bliss, in bliss.

## LAURENCE BINYON

### *Isoult*

Tristram, my heart must break.  
O leave me not in the grave  
Of the dark world! Me too take!  
Save me, O Tristram, save!

### (iii)

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night  
On to that shore roll slow,  
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,  
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge  
For ever out of unexhausted might,  
Lifting their voice below  
Tuned to no human dirge;  
Nor from their majesty of music bend  
To wail for beauty's end  
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;  
Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil  
To weeping eyes their woe,  
The dawn that doth not know  
What the dark night hath wrought,  
And over the far wave comes pacing pale,  
Of all that she reveals regarding nought.—  
But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread;  
Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,  
Sleepless with dread,  
Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,  
Till from afar the salt scent of the air  
Blows on her brow; and now

## LAURENCE BINYON

In that pale space beyond the open door  
What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair  
By keen degrees aware  
That with the dawn her widowhood is there?

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear  
Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,  
Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,  
Not silence drear!  
Not to be vanquished so  
By silence on the lips that were so dear!  
Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face  
That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,  
Another face she knows not, yet knows well,  
Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,  
Propping it where it fell  
In a vain tenderness,  
But dead,—her great dream-hated rival dead,  
Invulnerably dead,  
Dead as her love, and cold,  
And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.  
She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,  
And love, long-baffled, surges back again  
Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,  
While the tears blindly rain,  
'I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I  
That for his dear sake had been glad to die.  
I loved him not enough, I could not keep  
His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!  
I cannot touch him. Will none set him free  
From those, those other arms and give him me?  
Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.

## LAURENCE BINYON

He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,  
Not mine, not mine!

I loved him not enough, I could not hold  
My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.  
I had not any care

To keep him from the darkness and the cold.

O all my wretched servants, where were ye?

Hath none in my house tended him but she?

Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?

Come hither, laggards all!

Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare

Upon your lord; 'tis he!

Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.

And set me out within the hall a bier,

And wedding robes, the costliest that are

In all my house, prepare,

And lay upon the silks these princely dead,

And bid the sailors take that funeral bed

And set it in the ship, and put to sea,

And north to Cornwall steer.

Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.

Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!

Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,

Not mine, not mine, not mine!

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.

The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!

No light hath his eye seen

Since she is gone, no pleasure; he grows gray;

His knights apart make merry and wassail,

With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play;

But he sits solitary all the day,

## LAURENCE BINYON

Thinking of what hath been.  
And now through all the castle rings a wail;  
The king arises; all his knights are dumb;  
The queen, the queen is come.  
Not as she came of old,  
Sweeping with gesture proud  
To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,  
And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,  
And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold;  
But mute she comes and cold,  
Borne on a bier, apparelled in a shroud,  
Daisies about her sprinkled; and now bowed  
Is her lord's head; and hushing upon all  
Thoughts of sorrow fall,  
As the snow softly, without any word;  
And every breast is stirred  
With wonder in its weeping;  
For by her sleeping side,  
In that long sleep no morning shall divide,  
Is Tristram sleeping;  
Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore  
That he would clasp his dear love never more,  
And sailed far over sea  
Far from his bliss and shame,  
And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany  
And to uncloud at last the glory of his name.  
Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,  
Come again home  
In all men's sight, as when of old they came,  
And Tristram led Isoult, another's bride,  
True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,  
And silver trumpets blew

## LAURENCE BINYON

To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,  
And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried  
On Tristram's name anew,  
Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long  
On them that wrought him wrong,  
Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes  
Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:  
Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.  
'Beautiful ever, O Isolt, wast thou,  
And beautiful art thou now,  
Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,  
Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;  
But this is the last reproach, and this the last  
Forgiveness that thou hast.  
Lost is the lost, Isolt, and past the past!  
O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide  
Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,  
Nor need to wrestle sore  
With thy great love and with thy fixèd oath,  
For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,  
Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.  
Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad;  
But I lack all things that I ever had,  
My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage;  
And empty is the house of my old age.  
Behold, I have laboured all my days to part  
These two, that were the dearest to my heart.  
Isolt, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,  
My treasure, that I found so very fair,  
The treasure I had taken with a snare:



LAURENCE BINYON

To keep thee mine, this was my life's delight.  
And now the end is come, alone I stand,  
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand.'

HILAIRE BELLOC

1870-

115

*Tarantella*

**D**O you remember an Inn,  
Miranda?  
Do you remember an Inn?  
And the tedding and the spreading  
Of the straw for a bedding,  
And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,  
And the wine that tasted of the tar?  
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers  
(Under the dark of the vine verandah)?  
Do you remember an Inn, Miranda,  
Do you remember an Inn?  
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers  
Who hadn't got a penny,  
And who weren't paying any,  
And the hammer at the doors and the Din?  
And the Hip! Hop! Hap!  
Of the clap  
Of the hands to the twirl and the swirl  
Of the girl gone chancing,  
Glancing,  
Dancing,  
Backing and advancing,  
Snapping of the clapper to the spin  
Out and in—

## HILAIRE BELLOC

And the Ting, Tong, Tang of the guitar!  
Do you remember an Inn,  
Miranda?  
Do you remember an Inn?

Never more;  
Miranda,  
Never more.  
Only the high peaks hoar:  
And Aragon a torrent at the door.  
No sound  
In the walls of the Halls where falls  
The tread  
Of the feet of the dead to the ground.  
No sound:  
Only the boom  
Of the far Waterfall like Doom.

## WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

1871-1940

116

### *Joy and Pleasure*

NOW, Joy is born of parents poor,  
And Pleasure of our richer kind;  
Though Pleasure's free, she cannot sing  
As sweet a song as Joy confined.

Pleasure's a Moth, that sleeps by day  
And dances by false glare at night;  
But Joy's a Butterfly, that loves  
To spread its wings in Nature's light.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

Joy's like a Bee that gently sucks  
    Away on blossoms its sweet hour;  
But Pleasure's like a greedy Wasp,  
    That plums and cherries would devour.

Joy's like a Lark that lives alone,  
    Whose ties are very strong, though few;  
But Pleasure like a Cuckoo roams,  
    Makes much acquaintance, no friends true.

Joy from her heart doth sing at home,  
    With little care if others hear;  
But Pleasure then is cold and dumb,  
    And sings and laughs with strangers near.

117

*Truly Great*

MY walls outside must have some flowers,  
My walls within must have some books;  
A house that's small; a garden large,  
    And in it leafy nooks.

A little gold that's sure each week;  
    That comes not from my living kind,  
But from a dead man in his grave,  
    Who cannot change his mind.

A lovely wife, and gentle too;  
    Contented that no eyes but mine  
Can see her many charms, nor voice  
    To call her beauty fine.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

Where she would in that stone cage live,  
A self-made prisoner, with me;  
While many a wild bird sang around,  
On gate, on bush, on tree.

And she sometimes to answer them,  
In her far sweeter voice than all;  
Till birds, that loved to look on leaves,  
Will doat on a stone wall.

With this small house, this garden large,  
This little gold, this lovely mate,  
With health in body, peace at heart—  
Show me a man more great.

118

*Money*

WHEN I had money, money, O!  
I knew no joy till I went poor;  
For many a false man as a friend  
Came knocking all day at my door.

Then felt I like a child that holds  
A trumpet that he must not blow  
Because a man is dead; I dared  
Not speak to let this false world know.

Much have I thought of life, and seen  
How poor men's hearts are ever light;  
And how their wives do hum like bees  
About their work from morn till night.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

So, when I hear these poor ones laugh,  
And see the rich ones coldly frown—  
Poor men, think I, need not go up  
So much as rich men should come down.

When I had money, money, O!  
My many friends proved all untrue;  
But now I have no money, O!  
My friends are real, though very few.

119

*Leisure*

WHAT is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

120

*The Sluggard*

A JAR of cider and my pipe,  
In summer, under shady tree;  
A book of one that made his mind  
Live by its sweet simplicity:  
Then must I laugh at kings who sit  
In richest chambers, signing scrolls;  
And princes cheered in public ways,  
And stared at by a thousand fools.

Let me be free to wear my dreams,  
Like weeds in some mad maiden's hair,  
When she doth think the earth has not  
Another maid so rich and fair;  
And proudly smiles on rich and poor,  
The queen of all fair women then:  
So I, dressed in my idle dreams,  
Will think myself the king of men.

121

*The Best Friend*

NOW shall I walk,  
Or shall I ride?  
Ride,' Pleasure said;  
'Walk,' Joy replied.

Now what shall I—  
Stay home or roam?  
'Roam,' Pleasure said;  
And Joy—'Stay home.'

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

Now shall I dance,  
Or sit for dreams?  
'Sit,' answers Joy;  
'Dance,' Pleasure screams.

Which of ye two  
Will kindest be?  
Pleasure laughed sweet,  
But Joy kissed me.

122

*School's out*

GIRLS scream,  
Boys shout;  
Dogs bark,  
School's out.

Cats run,  
Horses shy;  
Into trees  
Birds fly.

Babes wake  
Open-eyed;  
If they can,  
Tramps hide.

Old man,  
Hobble home;  
Merry mites,  
Welcome.

MANMOHAN GHOSE

1870-1924

123      *Who is it talks of Ebony?*

WHO is it talks of ebony,  
Who of the raven's plume?  
The glory of your tresses black  
Will yield to neither room.

So thick the ambrosial dusk of you  
Glooms in your locks, soul, sight,  
The world itself is swallowed up  
In darkness and delight.

Tell me no more that black must be  
Light's baffle, colour's loss.  
Your tresses shoot into the sun  
A richly purple gloss.

It was the sunshine white of you  
Which cast that wealth of shade.  
There from the burning light of you  
The world and I am laid.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE

1870-1944

124      *The Dying Swan*

SILVER-THROATED Swan  
Struck, struck! a golden dart  
Clean through thy breast has gone  
Home to thy heart.



## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!  
O silver trumpet, pour  
Love for defiance back  
On him who smote!  
And brim, brim o'er  
With love; and ruby-dye thy track  
Down thy last living reach  
Of river, sail the golden light . . .  
Enter the sun's heart . . . even teach,  
O wondrous-gifted Pain, teach thou  
The god to love, let him learn how.

125

### *Kindness*

OF the beauty of kindness I speak,  
Of a smile, of a charm  
On the face it is pleasure to meet,  
That gives no alarm!

Of the soul that absorbeth itself  
In discovering good,  
Of that power which outlasts health,  
As the spell of a wood

Outlasts the sad fall of the leaves,  
And in winter is fine,  
And from snow and from frost receives  
A garment divine.

Oh! well may the lark sing of this,  
As through rents of huge cloud,  
He broacheth' blue gulfs that are bliss,  
For they make his heart proud

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

With the power of wings deployed  
In delightfulest air.  
Yea, thus among things enjoyed  
Is kindness rare.

For even the weak with surprise  
Spread wings, utter song,  
They can launch . . . in this blue they can rise,  
In this kindness are strong, . . .

They can launch like a ship into calm.  
Which was penned up by storm,  
Which sails for the islands of balm  
Luxuriant and warm.

### 126 *Response to Rimbaud's Later Manner*

THE cow eats green grass;  
Alas, alas!  
Nothing to eat  
Surrounds my feet!

Diamond clad  
In the stream the nafad  
Never sips, dips  
All save her lips.

They, they, and not I,  
Never ask why  
The Cathedral tower  
Dreams like a flower.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE

They, they, are healed  
From thought congealed  
That ploughs up the heart  
Which takes its own part.

They, they, have refound  
Eternity;  
Which is the sun bound  
In the arms of the sea.

127

*Variation on Ronsard*

TIME flits away, time flits away, lady;  
Alas, not time, but we  
Whose childish limbs once skipped so fairily,  
And still to dance are free.

Things are forgot, things are forgot, lady;  
Alas, not things alone,  
But dames whose sweet, sweet names chimed airily  
Are no more loved or known.

How bright those stars! and think, each bright star stays,  
Though all else fair be brief;  
Leisure have they and peace and length of days  
And love, 'tis my belief.

For Love gives light, Love vows his light will last,  
And Love instilleth peace . . .  
As lake returns the star-rays downward cast,  
Be thou the Love, Love sees.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE

128

*The Event*

SHAPED and vacated  
See rhythms lie scattered like shells!  
Heed one and through it  
What stimulus swells!

Let meaning now mate it;  
As pallor may quit a hushed face  
And health re-endue it  
With courage and grace,

Lilt, pulsed to a tune when  
Some storm has been lulled on the deep,  
Resurgent can capture  
Words from their sleep.

T'ward him who shall croon them  
Lo! Psyche herself rides the wave  
With ear all rapture  
At a thought in its cave.

—Knees bend you before  
Vision woven of sound,  
That floats like a shell to the shore,  
Both given and found.

129

*The Gazelles*

WHEN the sheen on tall summer grass is pale,  
Across blue skies white clouds float on  
In shoals, or disperse and singly sail,  
Till, the sun being set, they all are gone:

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

Yet, as long as they may shine bright in the sun,  
They flock or stray through the daylight bland,  
While their stealthy shadows like foxes run  
Beneath where the grass is dry and tanned:

And the waste, in hills that swell and fall,  
Goes heaving into yet dreamier haze;  
And a wonder of silence is over all  
Where the eye feeds long like a lover's gaze:

Then, cleaving the grass, gazelles appear  
(The gentler dolphins of kindlier waves)  
With sensitive heads alert of ear;  
Frail crowds that a delicate hearing saves,

That rely on the nostrils' keenest power,  
And are governed from trance-like distances  
By hopes and fears, and, hour by hour,  
Sagacious of safety, snuff the breeze.

They keep together, the timid hearts;  
And each one's fear with a panic thrill  
Is passed to an hundred; and if one starts  
In three seconds all are over the hill.

A Nimrod might watch, in his hall's wan space,  
After the feast, on the moonlit floor,  
The timorous mice that troop and race,  
As tranced o'er those herds the sun doth pour;

Like a wearied tyrant sated with food  
Who envies each tiniest thief that steals  
A crumb from his abstracted mood,  
For the zest and daring it reveals.

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

He alone, save the quite dispassionate moon,  
Sees them; she stares at the prowling pard  
Who surprises their sleep and, ah! how soon  
Is riding the weakest or sleepest hard!

Let an agony's nightmare course begin,  
Four feet with five spurs a-piece control,  
Like a horse thief reduced to save his skin  
Or a devil that rides a human soul!

The race is as long as recorded time,  
Yet brief as the flash of assassin's knife;  
For 'tis crammed as history is with crime  
'Twixt the throbs at taking and losing life;

Then the warm wet clutch on the nape of the neck,  
Through which the keen incisors drive;  
Then the fleet knees give, down drops the wreck  
Of yesterday's pet that was so alive.

Yet the moon is naught concerned, ah no!  
She shines as on a drifting plank  
Far in some northern sea-stream's flow  
From which two numbed hands loosened and sank.

Such thinning their number must suffer; and worse  
When hither at times the Shah's children roam,  
Their infant listlessness to immerse  
In energy's ancient upland home:

For here the shepherd in years of old  
Was taught by the stars, and bred a race  
That welling forth from these highlands rolled  
In tides of conquest o'er earth's face:

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

On piebald ponies or else milk-white,  
Here, with green bridles in silver bound,  
A crescent moon on the violet night  
Of their saddle cloths, or a sun rayed round,

With tiny bells on their harness ringing,  
And voices that laugh and are shrill by starts,  
Prancing, curvetting, and with them bringing  
Swift chetahs cooped up in light-wheeled carts,

They come, and their dainty pavilions pitch  
In some valley, beside a sinuous pool,  
Where a grove of cedars towers in which  
Heron have built, where the shade is cool;

Where they tether their ponies to low-hung boughs,  
Where long through the night their red fires gleam,  
Where the morning's stir doth them arouse  
To their bath in the lake, as from dreams to a dream.

And thence in an hour their hunt rides forth,  
And the chetahs course the shy gazelle  
To the east or west or south or north;  
And every eve in a distant vale

A hecatomb of the slaughtered beasts  
Is piled; tongues loll from breathless throats;  
Round large jet eyes the horsefly feasts . . .  
Jet eyes, which now a blue film coats:

Dead there they bleed, and each prince there  
Is met by his sister, wife, or bride . . .  
Delicious ladies with long dark hair,  
And soft dark eyes, and brows arched wide,

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

In quilted jacket, embroidered sash,  
And tent-like skirts of pleated lawn;  
While their silk-lined jewelled slippers flash  
Round bare feet bedded like pools at dawn:

So choicefully prepared to please,  
Young, female, royal of race and mood,  
In indolent compassion these  
O'er those dead beauteous creatures brood:

They lean some minutes against their friend,  
A lad not slow to praise himself,  
Who tells how this one met his end  
Out-raced, or trapped by leopard stealth,

And boasts his chetahs fleetest are;  
Through his advice the chance occurred,  
That leeward vale by which the car  
Was well brought round to head the herd.

Seeing him bronzed by sun and wind,  
She feels his power and owns him lord,  
Then, that his courage may please her mind,  
With a soft coy hand half draws his sword,

Just shudders to see the cold steel gleam,  
And drops it back in the long curved sheath;  
She will merge his evening meal in a dream  
And embalm his slumber like the wreath

Of heavy-lidded flowers bewitched  
To murmur words of ecstasy  
For king who, though with all else enriched,  
Pays warlock for tones the young hear free.



## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

But, while they sleep, the orphaned herd  
And wounded stragglers, through the night  
Wander in pain, and wail unheard  
To the moon and the stars so cruelly bright.

Why are they born? ah! why beget  
They in the long November gloom  
Heirs of their beauty, their fleetness . . . yet  
Heirs of their panics, their pangs, their doom?

That to princely spouses children are born  
To be daintily bred and taught to please,  
Has a fitness like the return of morn:  
But why perpetuate lives like these?

Why, with horns that jar and with fiery eyes,  
Should the male stags fight for the shuddering does  
Through the drear dark nights, with frequent cries  
From tyrant lust or outlawed woes?

Doth the meaningless beauty of their lives  
Rave in the spring, when they course afar  
Like the shadows of birds, and the young fawn strives  
Till its parents no longer the fleetest are?

Like the shadows of flames which the sun's rays throw  
On a kiln's blank wall, where glaziers dwell,  
Pale shadows as those from glasses they blow,  
Yet that lap at the blank wall and rebel . . .

Even so to my curious trance-like thought  
Those herds move over those pallid hills,  
With fever as of a frail life caught  
In circumstance o'er-charged with ills;

## THOMAS STURGE MOORE

More like the shadow of lives than life,  
Or most like the life that is never born  
From baffled purpose and foredoomed strife,  
That in each man's heart must be hidden from scorn,

Yet with something of beauty very rare  
Unseizable, fugitive, half discerned;  
The trace of intentions that might have been fair  
In action, left on a face that yearned

But long has ceased to yearn, alas!  
So faint a trace do they leave on the slopes  
Of hills as sleek as their coats with grass;  
So faint may the trace be of noblest hopes.

Yet why are they born to roam and die?  
Can their beauty answer thy query, O soul?  
Nay, nor that of hopes which were born to fly,  
But whose pinions the common and coarse day stole.

Like that region of grassy hills outspread,  
A realm of our thought knows days and nights  
And summers and winters, and has fed  
Ineffectual herds of vanished delights.

## JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

1871-1909

130

### *Queens*

SEVEN dog-days we let pass  
Naming Queens in Glenmacnass,  
All the rare and royal names  
Wormy sheepskin yet retains:  
Etain, Helen, Maeve and Fand,  
Golden Deirdre's tender hand;

## JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

Bert, the big-foot, sung by Villon,  
Cassandra, Ronsard found in Lyon.  
Queens of Sheba, Meath and Connaught,  
Coifed with crown, or gaudy bonnet;  
Queens whose finger once did stir men,  
Queens were eaten of fleas and vermin,  
Queens men drew like Monna Lisa,  
Or slew with drugs in Rome and Pisa.  
We named Lucrezia Crivelli,  
And Titian's lady with amber belly,  
Queens acquainted in learned sin,  
Jane of Jewry's slender shin:  
Queens who cut the bogs of Glanna,  
Judith of Scripture, and Gloriana,  
Queens who wasted the East by proxy,  
Or drove the ass-cart, a tinker's doxy.  
Yet these are rotten—I ask their pardon—  
And we've the sun on rock and garden;  
These are rotten, so you're the Queen  
Of all are living, or have been.

131

### *On an Anniversary*

*After reading the dates in a book of Lyrics*

WITH Fifteen-ninety or Sixteen-sixteen  
We end Cervantes, Marot, Nashe or Green:  
Then Sixteen-thirteen till two score and nine,  
Is Crashaw's niche, that honey-lipped divine.  
They'll say I came in Eighteen-seventy-one,  
And died in Dublin . . . What year will they write  
For my poor passage to the stall of night?

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

132

*On a Birthday*

FRIEND of Ronsard, Nashe and Beaumont  
Lark of Ulster, Meath, and Thomond,  
Heard from Smyrna and Sahara  
To the surf of Connemara,  
Lark of April, June, and May,  
Sing loudly this my Lady-day.

133

*A Question*

I ASKED if I got sick and died, would you  
With my black funeral go walking too,  
If you'd stand close to hear them talk or pray  
While I'm let down in that steep bank of clay.

And, No, you said, for if you saw a crew  
Of living idiots pressing round that new  
Oak coffin—they alive, I dead beneath  
That board—you'd rave and rend them with your teeth.

134

*In Glencullen*

THRUSH, linnet, stare and wren,  
Brown lark beside the sun,  
Take thought of kestrel, sparrow-hawk,  
Birdlime and roving gun.

You great-great-grand-children  
Of birds I've listened to,  
I think I robbed your ancestors  
When I was young as you.

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

135

*I've Thirty Months*

I'VE thirty months, and that's my pride,  
Before my age's a double score,  
Though many lively men have died  
At twenty-nine or little more.

I've left a long and famous set  
Behind some seven years or three,  
But there are millions I'd forget  
Will have their laugh at passing me.

136

*Prelude*

STILL south I went and west and south again,  
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,  
And far from cities, and the sights of men,  
Lived with the sunshine, and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,  
The grey and wintry sides of many glens,  
And did but half remember human words,  
In converse with the mountains, moors, and fens.

137

*Winter*

*(With little money in a great city)*

THERE 'S snow in every street  
Where I go up and down,  
And there's no woman, man, or dog  
That knows me in the town.

## JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

I know each shop, and all  
These Jews, and Russian Poles,  
For I go walking night and noon  
To spare my sack of coals.

### 138 *He wishes he might die and follow* *Laura*

**I**N the years of her age the most beautiful and the most flowery—the time Love has his mastery—Laura, who was my life, has gone away leaving the earth stripped and desolate. She has gone up into the Heavens, living and beautiful and naked, and from that place she is keeping her Lordship and her rein upon me, and I crying out: Ohone, when will I see that day breaking that will be my first day with herself in Paradise?

My thoughts are going after her, and it is that way my soul would follow her, lightly, and airily, and happily, and I would be rid of all my great troubles. But what is delaying me is the proper thing to lose me utterly, to make me a greater weight on my own self.

Oh, what a sweet death I might have died this day three years to-day!

(From Petrarch.)

### 139 *He understands the Great Cruelty of* *Death*

**M**Y flowery and green age was passing away, and I feeling a chill in the fires had been wasting my heart, for I was drawing near the hillside that is above the grave.

Then my sweet enemy was making a start, little by little, to give over her great wariness, the way she was wringing

## JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

a sweet thing out of my sharp sorrow. The time was coming when Love and Decency can keep company, and lovers may sit together and say out all the things are in their hearts. But Death had his grudge against me, and he got up in the way, like an armed robber, with a pike in his hand.

(From *Petrarch*.)

### 140 *Laura waits for him in Heaven*

THE first day she passed up and down through the Heavens, gentle and simple were left standing, and they in great wonder, saying one to the other:

'What new light is that? What new beauty at all? The like of her hasn't risen up these long years from the common world.'

And herself, well pleased with the Heavens, was going forward, matching herself with the most perfect that were before her, yet one time, and another, waiting a little, and turning her head back to see if myself was coming after her. It's for that I'm lifting up all my thoughts and will into the Heavens, because I do hear her praying that I should be making haste for ever.

(From *Petrarch*.)

### 141 *An Old Woman's Lamentations*

THE man I had a love for—a great rascal would kick me in the gutter—is dead thirty years and over it, and it is I am left behind, grey and aged. When I do be minding the good days I had, minding what I was one time, and what it is I'm come to, and when I do look on my own self, poor and dry, and pinched together, it wouldn't be much would set me raging in the streets.

## JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

Where is the round forehead I had, and the fine hair, and the two eyebrows, and the eyes with a big gay look out of them would bring folly from a great scholar? Where is my straight, shapely nose, and two ears, and my chin with a valley in it, and my lips were red and open?

Where are the pointed shoulders were on me, and the long arms and nice hands to them? Where is my bosom was as white as any, or my straight rounded sides?

It's the way I am this day—my forehead is gone away into furrows, the hair of my head is grey and whitish, my eyebrows are tumbled from me, and my two eyes have died out within my head—those eyes that would be laughing to the men—my nose has a hook on it, my ears are hanging down, and my lips are sharp and skinny.

That's what's left over from the beauty of a right woman—a bag of bones, and legs the like of two shrivelled sausages going beneath it.

It's of the like of that we old hags do be thinking, of the good times are gone away from us, and we crouching on our hunkers by a little fire of twigs, soon kindled and soon spent, we that were the pick of many.

*(From Villon.)*

## RALPH HODGSON

1872-

142

### *The Bull*

SEE an old unhappy bull,  
Sick in soul and body both,  
Slouching in the undergrowth  
Of the forest beautiful,  
Banished from the herd he led,  
Bulls and cows a thousand head.



## RALPH HODGSON

Cranes and gaudy parrots go  
Up and down the burning sky;  
Tree-top cats purr drowsily  
In the dim-day green below;  
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,  
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit  
Picking offal buck or swine,  
On the mess and over it  
Burnished flies and beetles shine,  
And spiders big as bladders lie  
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled  
Round and round and round a tree,  
Yellowing its greenery,  
Keeps a watch on all the world,  
All the world and this old bull  
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:  
One he led, a bull of blood  
Newly come to lustihood,  
Fought and put his prince to shame,  
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head  
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,  
Left him there without a lick,  
Left him for the birds to pick,  
Left him there for carrion,  
Vilely from their bosom cast  
Wisdom, worth and love at last.

## RALPH HODGSON

When the lion left his lair  
And roared his beauty through the hills,  
And the vultures pecked their quills  
And flew into the middle air,  
Then this prince no more to reign  
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,  
He saw the blood upon the ground,  
And snuffed the burning airs around  
Still with beevish odours sweet,  
While the blood ran down his head  
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,  
All his splendour, all his strength,  
All his body's breadth and length  
Dwindled down with shame and grief,  
Half the bull he was before,  
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep  
In the rushes at the lake,  
Surly, stupid, half asleep,  
Waiting for his heart to break  
And the birds to join the flies  
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes;

Standing with his head hung down  
In a stupor, dreaming things:  
Green savannas, jungles brown,  
Battlefields and bellowings,  
Bulls undone and lions dead  
And vultures flapping overhead.

## RALPH HODGSON

Dreaming things: of days he spent  
With his mother gaunt and lean  
In the valley warm and green,  
Full of baby wonderment,  
Blinking out of silly eyes  
At a hundred mysteries;

Dreaming over once again  
How he wandered with a throng  
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,  
Wandered on from plain to plain,  
Up the hill and down the dale,  
Always at his mother's tail;

How he lagged behind the herd,  
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,  
And she turned and ran to him  
Blaring at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day  
When her drained and drying paps  
Turned him to the sweets and saps,  
Richer fountains by the way,  
And she left the bull she bore  
And he looked to her no more;

And his little frame grew stout,  
And his little legs grew strong,  
And the way was not so long;  
And his little horns came out,  
And he played at butting trees  
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

## RALPH HODGSON

Joined a game of knobby skulls  
With the youngsters of his year,  
All the other little bulls,  
Learning both to bruise and bear,  
Learning how to stand a shock  
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,  
Dreaming of a time less far,  
When the faint but certain star  
Of destiny burned clear for him,  
And a fierce and wild unrest  
Broke the quiet of his breast,

And the gristles of his youth  
Hardened in his comely pow,  
And he came to fighting growth,  
Beat his bull and won his cow,  
And flew his tail and trampled off  
Past the tallest, vain enough,

And curved about in splendour full  
And curved again and snuffed the airs  
As who should say Come out who dares !  
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,  
And knew that here was surely one  
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd  
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,  
And shook the forest with his sound,  
Bellowed at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

## RALPH HODGSON

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,  
Surely dreaming of the hour  
When he came to sultan power,  
And they owned him master-horn,  
Chieftest bull of all among  
Bulls and cows a thousand strong;

And in all the tramping herd  
Not a bull that barred his way,  
Not a cow that said him nay,  
Not a bull or cow that erred  
In the furnace of his look  
Dared a second, worse rebuke;

Not in all the forest wide,  
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,  
Not another dared him then,  
Dared him and again defied;  
Not a sovereign buck or boar  
Came a second time for more;

Not a serpent that survived  
Once the terrors of his hoof  
Risked a second time reproof,  
Came a second time and lived,  
Not a serpent in its skin  
Came again for discipline;

Not a leopard bright as flame,  
Flashing fingerhooks of steel  
That a wooden tree might feel,  
Met his fury once and came  
For a second reprimand,  
Not a leopard in the land;

## RALPH HODGSON

Not a lion of them all,  
Not a lion of the hills,  
Hero of a thousand kills,  
Dared a second fight and fall,  
Dared that ram terrific twice,  
Paid a second time the price.

Pity him, this dupe of dream,  
Leader of the herd again  
Only in his daft old brain,  
Once again the bull supreme  
And bull enough to bear the part  
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;  
Even now the swarm of flies  
Blackening his bloodshot eyes  
Bursts and blusters round the lake,  
Scattered from the feast half-fed,  
By great shadows overhead;

And the dreamer turns away  
From his visionary herds  
And his splendid yesterday,  
Turns to meet the loathly birds  
Flocking round him from the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

*The Listeners*

'IS there anybody there?' said the Traveller,  
    Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses  
    Of the forest's ferny floor:  
And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
    Above the Traveller's head:  
And he smote upon the door again a second time;  
    'Is there anybody there?' he said.  
But no one descended to the Traveller;  
    No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
    Where he stood perplexed and still.  
But only a host of phantom listeners  
    That dwelt in the lone house then  
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
    To that voice from the world of men:  
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,  
    That goes down to the empty hall,  
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
    By the lonely Traveller's call.  
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
    Their stillness answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,  
    'Neath the starred and leafy sky;  
For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
    Louder, and lifted his head:—  
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
    That I kept my word,' he said.

WALTER DE LA MARE

Never the least stir made the listeners,  
Though every word he spake  
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house  
From the one man left awake:  
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
And the sound of iron on stone,  
And how the silence surged softly backward,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

144

*Winter*

CLOUDED with snow  
The cold winds blow,  
And shrill on leafless bough  
The robin with its burning breast  
Alone sings now.

The rayless sun,  
Day's journey done,  
Sheds its last ebbing light  
On fields in leagues of beauty spread  
Unearthly white.

Thick draws the dark,  
And spark by spark,  
The frost-fires kindle, and soon  
Over that sea of frozen foam  
Floats the white moon.

145

*The Scribe*

WHAT lovely things  
Thy hand hath made:  
The smooth-plumed bird  
In its emerald shade,



WALTER DE LA MARE

The seed of the grass,  
The speck of stone  
Which the wayfaring ant  
Stirs—and hastes on!

Though I should sit  
By some tarn in thy hills,  
Using its ink  
As the spirit wills  
To write of Earth's wonders,  
Its live, willed things,  
Flit would the ages  
On soundless wings  
Ere unto Z  
My pen drew nigh;  
Leviathan told,  
And the honey-fly:

And still would remain  
My wit to try—  
My worn reeds broken,  
The dark tarn dry,  
All words forgotten—  
Thou, Lord, and I.

146

*All that's Past*

VERY old are the woods;  
And the buds that break  
Out of the brier's boughs,  
When March winds wake,

## WALTER DE LA MARE

So old with their beauty are—  
Oh, no man knows  
Through what wild centuries  
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;  
And the rills that rise  
Where snow sleeps cold beneath  
The azure skies  
Sing such a history  
Of come and gone,  
Their every drop is as wise  
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;  
Our dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden  
By Eve's nightingales;  
We wake and whisper awhile,  
But, the day gone by,  
Silence and sleep like fields  
Of amaranth lie.

147

### *Echo*

'WHO called?' I said, and the words  
Through the whispering glades,  
Hither, thither, baffled the birds—  
'Who called? Who called?'

The leafy boughs on high  
Hissed in the sun;  
The dark air carried my cry  
Faintly on:

WALTER DE LA MARE

Eyes in the green, in the shade,  
In the motionless brake,  
Voices that said what I said,  
For mockery's sake:  
'Who cares?' I bawled through my tears:  
The wind fell low:  
In the silence, 'Who cares? who cares?'  
Wailed to and fro.

148

*The Silver Penny*

'SAILORMAN, I'll give to you  
My bright silver penny,  
If out to sea you'll sail me  
And my dear sister Jenny.'

'Get in, young sir, I'll sail ye  
And your dear sister Jenny,  
But pay she shall her golden locks  
Instead of your penny.'

They sail away, they sail away,  
O fierce the winds blew!  
The foam flew in clouds,  
And dark the night grew!

And all the wild sea-water  
Climbed steep into the boat;  
Back to the shore again  
Sail they will not.

Drowned is the sailorman,  
Drowned is sweet Jenny,  
And drowned in the deep sea  
A bright silver penny.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

1874-

149

*To Iron-Founders and Others*

WHEN you destroy a blade of grass  
You poison England at her roots:  
Remember no man's foot can pass  
Where evermore no green life shoots.

You force the birds to wing too high  
Where your unnatural vapours creep:  
Surely the living rocks shall die  
When birds no rightful distance keep.

You have brought down the firmament  
And yet no heaven is more near;  
You shape huge deeds without event,  
And half made men believe and fear.

Your worship is your furnaces,  
Which, like old idols, lost obscenes,  
Have molten bowels; your vision is  
Machines for making more machines.

O, you are busied in the night,  
Preparing destinies of rust;  
Iron misused must turn to blight  
And dwindle to a tettered crust.

The grass, forerunner of life, has gone,  
But plants that spring in ruins and shards  
Attend until your dream is done:  
I have seen hemlock in your yards.

## GORDON BOTTOMLEY

The generations of the worm  
Know not your loads piled on their soil;  
Their knotted ganglions shall wax firm  
Till your strong flagstones heave and toil.  
When the old hollowed earth is cracked,  
And when, to grasp more power and feasts,  
Its ores are emptied, wasted, lacked,  
The middens of your burning beasts  
Shall be raked over till they yield  
Last priceless slags for fashionings high,  
Ploughs to make grass in every field,  
Chisels men's hands to magnify.

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

1872-1936

### 150 *The Rolling English Road*

**B**EFORE the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode,  
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English  
road.

A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the shire,  
And after him the parson ran, the sexton and the squire;  
A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread  
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.

I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,  
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;  
But I did bash their baggonets because they came arrayed  
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,  
Where you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our  
hands,

The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

His sins they were forgiven him; or why do flowers run  
Behind him; and the hedges all strengthening in the sun?  
The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which  
was which,

But the wild rose was above him when they found him in the  
ditch.

God pardon us, nor harden us; we did not see so clear  
The night we went to Bannockburn by way of Brighton Pier.

My friends, we will not go again or ape an ancient rage,  
Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age,  
But walk with clearer eyes and ears this path that wandereth,  
And see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death;  
For there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,  
Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.

### 151 *Lepanto*

WHITE founts falling in the courts of the sun,  
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;  
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men  
feared,

It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard,  
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips,  
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.  
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,  
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,  
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,  
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross,  
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;  
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;  
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,  
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,  
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has  
    stirred,

Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half-attainted stall,  
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,  
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung,  
That once went singing southward when all the world was  
    young,

In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,  
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.  
Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,  
Don John of Austria is going to the war,  
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold  
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,  
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,  
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he  
    comes.

Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,  
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,  
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.  
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!  
Death-light of Africa!  
Don John of Austria  
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,  
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)  
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,  
His turban that is woven of the sunset and the seas.  
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,  
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the  
    trees,

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to  
bring

Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.

Giants and the Genii,

Multiplex of wing and eye,

Whose strong obedience broke the sky

When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn  
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in  
scorn;

They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the  
sea

Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be;

On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,

Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;

They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the  
ground,—

They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.

And he saith, 'Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk  
can hide,

And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,

And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,

For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.

We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,

Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done,

But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know

The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago:

It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate;

It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey in the gate!

It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth,

Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth.'



## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,  
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)

Sudden and still—hurrah!

Bolt from Iberia!

Don John of Austria

Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north  
(*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)

Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift

And the sea folk labour and the red sails lift.

He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;

The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone;

The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes

And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,

And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,

And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom,

And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,

But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.

Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse

Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,

Trumpet that sayeth ha!

*Domino gloria!*

Don John of Austria

Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck

(*Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.*)

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin,

And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in.

He holds a crystal phial that has colours like the moon,

He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon,

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey  
Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day,  
And death is in the phial, and the end of noble work,  
But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.  
Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed—  
Booms away past Italy the rumour of his raid.  
Gun upon gun, ha! ha!  
Gun upon gun, hurrah!  
Don John of Austria  
Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,  
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.*)  
The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,  
The secret window whence the world looks small and very  
    dear.  
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea  
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;  
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle  
    dark,  
They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark;  
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,  
And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous  
    griefs,  
Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines  
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.  
They are lost like slaves that swat, and in the skies of morning  
    hung  
The stairways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.  
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing  
    on  
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon.

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell  
Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his  
cell,

And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign—  
(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!*)

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,  
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,  
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,  
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,  
Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea  
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

*Vivat Hispania!*

*Domino Gloria!*

Don John of Austria

Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath

(*Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.*)

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,  
Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,  
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the  
blade. . . .

(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*)

## ALFRED EDGAR COPPARD

1878-

152

### *Mendacity*

TRUTH is love and love is truth,  
Either neither in good sooth:  
Truth is truth and love is love,  
Give us grace to taste thereof;

169

ALFRED EDGAR COPPARD

But if truth offend my sweet,  
Then I will have none of it,  
And if love offend the other,  
Farewell truth, I will not bother.

Happy truth when truth accords  
With the love in lovers' words!  
Harm not truth in any part,  
But keep its shadow from love's heart.  
Men must love, though lovers' lies  
Outpoll the stars in florid skies,  
And none may keep, and few can merit,  
The fond joy that they inherit.

Who with love at his command  
Dares give truth a welcome hand?  
Believe it, or believe it not,  
'Tis a lore most vainly got.  
Truth requites no penny-fee,  
Niggard's honey feeds no bee;  
Ere this trick of truth undo me,  
Little love, my love, come to me.

153

*The Apostate*

I'LL go, said I, to the woods and hills,  
In a park of doves I'll make my fires,  
And I'll fare like the badger and fox, I said,  
And be done with mean desires.

Never a lift of the hand I'll give  
Again in the world to bidders and buyers;  
I'll live with the snakes in the hedge, I said,  
And be done with mean desires.

ALFRED EDGAR COPPARD

I'll leave—and I left—my own true love.  
O faithful heart that never tires!  
I will return, tho' I'll not return  
To perish of mean desires.

Farewell, farewell to my kinsmen all,  
The worst were thieves and the best were liars,  
But the devil must take what he gave, I said,  
For I'm done with mean desires.

But the snake, the fox, the badger and I  
Are one in blood, like sons and sires,  
And as far from home as kingdom come  
I follow my mean desires.

154

*Epitaph*

LIKE silver dew are the tears of love,  
Like gold the smile of joy,  
But I had neither, silver, gold,  
Nor wit for their employ.

I had no gifts or fancies fair  
This poverty to mend:  
I was the son of my father,  
And had no other friend.

Though he that brings no grist to mill  
May con the reckoning o'er,  
Who comes into the world with naught  
Can scarce go out with more.

155

*Breakfast*

WE ate our breakfast lying on our backs  
 Because the shells were screeching overhead.  
 I bet a rasher to a loaf of bread  
 That Hull United would beat Halifax  
 When Jimmy Stainthorpe played full-back instead  
 Of Billy Bradford. Ginger raised his head  
 And cursed, and took the bet, and dropt back dead.  
 We ate our breakfast lying on our backs  
 Because the shells were screeching overhead.

156

*Old Skinflint*

'TWIXT Carrowbrough Edge and Settlingstones  
 See old daddy Skinflint dance in his bones,  
 Old Skinflint on the gallows-tree,  
 Old daddy Skinflint, the father of me.

*Why do you dance, do you dance so high?*

*Why do you dance in the windy sky?*

*Why do you dance in your naked bones*

*'Twixt Carrowbrough Edge and Settlingstones?*

*Old daddy Skinflint, the father of me,*

*Why do you dance on the gallows-tree,*

*Who never tripped on a dancing-floor*

*Or flung your heels in a reel before?*

## WILFRID GIBSON

*You taught me many a cunning thing,  
But never taught me to dance and sing;  
Yet I must do whatever you do,  
So when you dance I must dance too.*

'Twixt Carrowbrough Edge and Settlingstones  
See old daddy Skinflint dance in his bones,  
Old Skinflint on the gallows-tree,  
Old daddy Skinflint, the father of me.

157

### *Luck*

*WHAT bring you, sailor, home from the sea—  
Coffers of gold and of ivory?*

When first I went to sea as a lad  
A new jack-knife was all I had:

And I've sailed for fifty years and three  
To the coasts of gold and of ivory:

And now at the end of a lucky life,  
Well, still I've got my old jack-knife.

158

### *The Parrot*

LONG since I'd ceased to care  
Though he should curse and swear  
The little while he spent at home with me:  
And yet I couldn't bear  
To hear his parrot swear  
The day I learned my man was drowned at sea.

WILFRID GIBSON

He'd taught the silly bird  
To jabber word for word  
Outlandish oaths that he'd picked up at sea;  
And now it seemed I heard  
In every wicked word  
The dead man from the deep still cursing me.

A flood of easing tears,  
Though I'd not wept for years,  
Brought back old long-forgotten dreams to me,  
The foolish hopes and fears  
Of the first half-happy years  
Before his soul was stolen by the sea.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

1878-

159      *Portrait with Background*

**D**ERVORGILLA'S supremely lovely daughter,  
Recalling him, of all the Leinstermen Ri,  
*Him* whose love and hate brought o'er the water,  
Strongbow and Henry;

Brought rigid law, the long spear and the horsemen  
Riding in steel; and the rhymed, romantic, high line;  
Built those square keeps on the forts of the Norsemen,  
Still on our sky-line.

I would have brought, if I saw a chance of losing  
You, many more—we are living in War-rife time—  
Knights of the air and submarine men cruising,  
Trained through a life-time;



## OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Brought the implacable hand with law-breakers,  
Drilled the Too-many and broken their effrontery;  
Broken the dream of the men of a few acres  
    Ruling a country;

Brought the long day with its leisure and its duty,  
Built once again the limestone lordly houses—  
Founded on steel is the edifice of Beauty,  
    All it avows is.

Here your long limbs and your golden hair affright men,  
Slaves are their souls, and instinctively they hate them,  
Knowing full well that such charms can but invite men,  
    Heroes to mate them.

160

### *Ringsend*

*(After reading Tolstoi)*

I WILL live in Ringsend  
With a red-headed whore,  
And the fan-light gone in  
Where it lights the hall-door;  
And listen each night  
For her querulous shout,  
As at last she streels in  
And the pubs empty out.  
To soothe that wild breast  
With my old-fangled songs,  
Till she feels it redressed  
From inordinate wrongs,

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Imagined, outrageous,  
Preposterous wrongs,  
Till peace at last comes,  
Shall be all I will do,  
Where the little lamp blooms  
Like a rose in the stew;  
And up the back-garden  
The sound comes to me  
Of the lapsing, unsoilable,  
Whispering sea.

161

*Marcus Curtius*

In response to an oracle which declared that a gulf recently opened in the Forum could only be closed by casting into it that which Rome held dearest, Marcus Curtius, fully armed, mounted his war-horse and plunged, for that which Rome held dearest was her chivalry.

'TIS not by brooding on delight  
That men take heart of pride, and force  
To pull the saddle-girthings tight  
And close the gulf on staring horse.

From softness only softness comes;  
Urged by a bitterer shout within,  
Men of the trumpets and the drums  
Seek, with appropriate discipline,

That Glory past the pit or wall  
Which contradicts and stops the breath,  
And with immortalizing gall  
Builds the most stubborn things on death.

*The Conquest*

‘SINCE the Conquest none of us  
 Has died young except in battle.’  
 I knew that hers was no mean house,  
 And that beneath her innocent prattle  
 There was likely hid in words  
 What could never anger Fame;  
 The glory of continuous swords,  
 The obligations of a name.  
 Had I grown incredulous,  
 Thinking for a little space:  
 Though she has the daring brows,  
 She has not the falcon face;  
 In the storm from days of old  
 It is hard to keep at poise,  
 And it is the over-bold,  
 Gallant-hearted Fate destroys:  
 Could I doubt that her forbears  
 Kept their foot-hold on the sands,  
 Triumphed through eight hundred years,  
 From the hucksters kept their lands,  
 And still kept the conquering knack—  
 I who had myself gone down  
 Without waiting the attack  
 Of their youngest daughter’s frown?

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

163

*Per Iter Tenebricosum*

ENOUGH! Why should a man bemoan  
A Fate that leads the natural way?  
Or think himself a worthier one  
Than those who braved it in their day?  
If only gladiators died,  
Or heroes, Death would be his pride;  
But have not little maidens gone,  
And Lesbia's sparrow—all alone?

164

*Verse*

WHAT should we know,  
For better or worse,  
Of the Long Ago,  
Were it not for Verse:  
What ships went down;  
What walls were razed;  
Who won the crown;  
What lads were praised?  
A fallen stone,  
Or a waste of sands;  
And all is known  
Of Art-less lands.  
But you need not delve  
By the sea-side hills  
Where the Muse herself  
All Time fulfills,  
Who cuts with his scythe  
All things but hers;  
All but the blithe  
Hexameters.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

165

*After Galen*

ONLY the Lion and the Cock,  
As Galen says, withstand Love's shock.  
So, Dearest, do not think me rude  
If I yield now to lassitude,  
But sympathize with me. I know  
You would not have me roar, or crow.

166

*With a Coin from Syracuse*

WHERE is the hand to trace  
The contour of her face:  
The nose so straight and fine  
Down from the forehead's line;

The curved and curtal lip  
Full in companionship  
With that lip's overplus,  
Proud and most sumptuous,

Which draws its curve within,  
Swelling the faultless chin?  
What artist knows the technique  
Of the Doric neck:

The line that keeps with all  
The features vertical,  
Crowned with the thickly rolled  
And corrugated gold?

## OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

The curious hands are lost  
On the sweet Asian coast,  
That made the coins enwrought  
(Fairer than all they bought)

With emblems round the proud  
Untroubled face of god  
And goddess. Or they lie  
At Syracuse hard by

The Fountain Arethuse.  
Therefore from Syracuse  
I send this face to her  
Whose face is lovelier,

Alas, and as remote  
As hers around whose throat  
The curving fishes swim,  
As round a fountain's brim.

It shows on the reverse  
Pherenikos the horse;  
And that's as it should be:  
Horses she loves, for she

Is come of the old stock,  
Lords of the limestone rock  
And acres fit to breed  
Many a likely steed,

Straight in the back and bone,  
With head high, like her own,  
And blood that, tamed and mild,  
Can suddenly go wild.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

167

*Non Dolet*

OUR friends go with us as we go  
Down the long path where Beauty wends,  
Where all we love forgathers, so  
Why should we fear to join our friends?

Who would survive them to outlast  
His children; to outwear his fame—  
Left when the Triumph has gone past—  
To win from Age, not Time, a name?

Then do not shudder at the knife  
That Death's indifferent hand drives home,  
But with the Strivers leave the Strife,  
Nor, after Caesar, skulk in Rome.

168

*O Boys! O Boys!*

O BOYS, the times I've seen!  
The things I've done and known!  
If you knew where I have been?  
Or half the joys I've had,  
You never would leave me alone;  
But pester me to tell,  
Swearing to keep it dark,  
What . . . but I know quite well:  
Every solicitor's clerk  
Would break out and go mad;  
And all the dogs would bark!

## OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

There was a young fellow of old  
Who spoke of a wonderful town,  
Built on a lake of gold,  
With many a barge and raft  
Afloat in the cooling sun,  
And lutes upon the lake  
Played by such courtesans . . .  
The sight was enough to take  
The reason out of a man's  
Brain; and to leave him daft,  
Babbling of lutes and fans.

The tale was right enough:  
Willows and orioles,  
And ladies skilled in love.  
But they listened only to smirk,  
For he spoke to incredulous fools,  
And, maybe, was sorry he spoke;  
For no one believes in joys,  
And Peace on Earth is a joke,  
Which, anyhow, telling destroys;  
So better go on with your work:  
But Boys! O Boys! O Boys!

169

### *To Petronius Arbiter*

PROCONSUL of Bithynia,  
Who loved to turn the night to day,  
Yet for your ease had more to show  
Than others for their push and go,  
Teach us to save the Spirit's expense,  
And win to Fame through indolence.



OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

170

*The Image-Maker*

**H**ARD is the stone, but harder still  
The delicate preforming will  
That, guided by a dream alone,  
Subdues and moulds the hardest stone,  
Making the stubborn jade release  
The emblem of eternal peace.

If but the will be firmly bent,  
No stuff resists the mind's intent;  
The adamant abets his skill  
And sternly aids the artist's will,  
To clothe in perdurable pride  
Beauty his transient eyes desried.

171

*Palinode*

**T**WENTY years are gone  
Down the winding road,  
Years in which it shone  
More often than it snowed;  
And now old Time brings on,  
Brings on the palinode.

I have been full of mirth;  
I have been full of wine;  
And I have trod the earth  
As if it all were mine;  
And laughed to bring to birth  
The lighter lyric line.

## OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Before it was too late,  
One thing I learnt and saw:  
Prophets anticipate  
What Time brings round by law;  
Call age before its date  
To darken Youth with awe.

Why should you drink the rue?  
Or leave in righteous rage  
A world that will leave you  
Howe'er you walk the stage?  
Time needs no help to do  
His miracle of age.

A few years more to flow  
From miracle-working Time,  
And surely I shall grow  
Incapable of rhyme,  
Sans Love and Song, and so  
An echo of a mime.

Yet if my stone set forth  
The merry Attic blade's  
Remark, I shall have worth  
Achieved before Life fades:  
'A gentle man on Earth  
And gentle 'mid the Shades.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

172

*To Death*

**B**UT for your Terror  
Where would be Valour?  
What is Love for  
But to stand in your way?  
Taker and Giver,  
For all your endeavour  
You leave us with more  
Than you touch with decay!

173

*To a Boon Companion*

**I**F medals were ordained for drinks,  
Or soft communings with a minx,  
Or being at your ease belated,  
By Heavens, you'd be decorated.  
And not Alcmena's chesty son  
Have room to put your ribands on!

174

*Dedication*

**T**ALL unpopular men,  
Slim proud women who move  
As women walked in the islands when  
Temples were built to Love,  
I sing to you. With you  
Beauty at best can live,  
Beauty that dwells with the rare and few,  
Cold and imperative.  
He who had Caesar's ear  
Sang to the lonely and strong.  
Virgil made an austere  
Venus Muse of his song.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

175

*Colophon*

WHILE the Tragedy's afoot,  
Let us play in the high boot;  
Once the trumpets' notes are gone,  
Off, before the Fool comes on!

JOHN MASEFIELD

1878-

176

*Sea-Change*

'GONEYS an' gullies an' all o' the birds o' the sea  
They ain't no birds, not really,' said Billy the Dane.  
'Not mollics, nor gullies, nor goneys at all,' said he,  
'But simply the sperrits of mariners livin' again.

'Them birds goin' fishin' is nothin' but souls o' the drowned,  
Souls o' the drowned an' the kicked as are never no more  
An' that there haughty old albatross cruisin' around,  
Belike he's Admiral Nelson or Admiral Noah.

'An' merry 's the life they are living. They settle and dip,  
They fishes, they never stands watches, they waggle their  
wings;  
When a ship comes by, they fly to look at the ship  
To see how the nowadays mariners manages things.

'When freezing aloft in a snorter, I tell you I wish—  
(Though maybe it ain't like a Christian)—I wish I could be  
A haughty old copper-bound albatross dipping for fish  
And coming the proud over all o' the birds o' the sea.'

## JOHN MASEFIELD

177

### *'Port of Many Ships'*

'**I**T 'S a sunny pleasant anchorage, is Kingdom Come,  
Where crews is always layin' aft for double-tots o' rum,  
'N' there 's dancin' 'n' fiddlin' of ev'ry kind o' sort,  
It's a fine place for sailor-men is that there port.

'N' I wish—

I wish as I was there.

'The winds is never nothin' more than jest light airs,  
'N' no-one gets belayin'-pinned, 'n' no-one never swears,  
Yer free to loaf an' laze around, yer pipe atween yer lips,  
Lollin' on the fo'c's'le, sonny, lookin' at the ships.

'N' I wish—

I wish as I was there.

'For ridin' in the anchorage the ships of all the world  
Have got one anchor down 'n' all sails furled.  
All the sunken hookers 'n' the crews as took 'n' died  
They lays there merry, sonny, swingin' to the tide.

'N' I wish—

I wish as I was there.

'Drowned old wooden hookers green wi' drippin' wrack,  
Ships as never fetched to port, as never came back,  
Swingin' to the blushin' tide, dippin' to the swell,  
'N' the crews all singin', sonny, beatin' on the bell.

'N' I wish—

I wish as I was there.'

178      *A Valediction (Liverpool Docks)*

## A DRUNKEN SAILOR.

You can take 'n' tell Nan I'm goin' about the world agen,  
'N' that the world's wide.

'N' tell her that she'd best not keep her fires alight  
Nor set up late for me.

'N' tell her that the dollars of any other sailorman  
Is as good red gold as mine.

I'm new to this packet and all the ways of her,  
'N' I don't know of aught;

But I knows as I'm goin' down to the seas agen  
'N' the seas are salt 'n' drear;

But I knows as all the doin' as you're man enough for  
Won't make them lager-beer.

*'N' ain't there nothin' as I can do ashore for you  
When you've got fair afloat?—*

**You can buy a farm with the dollars as you've done me of 'N' cash my advance-note.**

*Is there anythin' you'd fancy for your breakfastin'  
When you're home across Mersey Bar?—*

## JOHN MASEFIELD

I wants a red herrin' 'n' a prairie oyster  
'N' a bucket of Three Star,  
'N' a girl with redder lips than Polly has got,  
'N' prettier ways than Nan—

*Well, so-long, Billy, 'n' a spankin' heavy pay-day to you!*

So-long, my fancy man!

179

### *Trade Winds*

**I**N the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish Seas,  
Are the tiny white houses and the orange-trees,  
And day-long, night-long, the cool and pleasant breeze  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

There is the red wine, the nutty Spanish ale,  
The shuffle of the dancers, the old salt's tale,  
The squeaking fiddle, and the souging in the sail  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

And o' nights there's fire-flies and the yellow moon,  
And in the ghostly palm-trees the sleepy tune  
Of the quiet voice calling me, the long low croon  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

180

### *Cargoes*

**Q**UINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant Ophir  
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,  
With a cargo of ivory,  
And apes and peacocks,  
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

## JOHN MASEFIELD

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,  
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,  
With a cargo of diamonds,  
Emeralds, amethysts,  
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack  
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road-rail, pig-lead,  
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

*Tettenhall.*

181

### *Port of Holy Peter*

THE blue laguna rocks and quivers,  
Dull gurgling eddies twist and spin,  
The climate does for people's livers,  
It 's a nasty place to anchor in  
Is Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

The town begins on the sea-beaches,  
And the town's mad with the stinging flies,  
The drinking water's mostly leeches,  
It 's a far remove from Paradise  
Is Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter



## JOHN MASEFIELD

There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting,  
And quiet graves in the sea slime,  
Stabbing, of course, and rum-hitting,  
Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

All the day the wind's blowing  
From the sick swamp below the hills,  
All the night the plague's growing,  
And the dawn brings the fever chills,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

You get a thirst there's no slaking,  
You get the chills and fever-shakes,  
Tongue yellow and head aching,  
And then the sleep that never wakes.  
And all the year the heat's baking,  
The sea rots and the earth quakes,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

*Tettenhall.*

EDWARD THOMAS

1878-1917

182      *If I should ever by Chance*

IF I should ever by chance grow rich  
I'll buy Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,  
Roses, Pyrigo, and Lapwater,  
And let them all to my elder daughter.  
The rent I shall ask of her will be only  
Each year's first violets, white and lonely,  
The first primroses and orchises—  
She must find them before I do, that is.  
But if she finds a blossom on furze  
Without rent they shall all for ever be hers,  
Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,  
Roses, Pyrigo, and Lapwater,—  
I shall give them all to my elder daughter.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

1879-

183      *The Dancer*

THE tall dancer dances  
With slowly taken breath:  
In his feet music,  
And on his face death.

His face is a mask,  
It is so still and white:  
His withered eyes shut,  
Unmindful of light.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

The old fiddler fiddles  
The merry '*Silver Tip*'  
With softly beating foot  
And laughing eye and lip.

And round the dark walls  
The people sit and stand,  
Praising the art  
Of the dancer of the land.

But he dances there  
As if his kin were dead:  
Clay in his thoughts,  
And lightning in his tread!

HAROLD MONRO

1879-1932

184

*Milk for the Cat*

WHEN the tea is brought at five o'clock,  
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,  
The little black cat with bright green eyes  
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,  
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,  
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,  
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes  
Take a soft large milky haze,  
And her independent casual glance  
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

## HAROLD MONRO

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,  
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,  
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes  
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;  
The two old ladies stroke their silk:  
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,  
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends  
At last from the clouds of the table above;  
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,  
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,  
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;  
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw  
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long, dim ecstasy holds her life;  
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,  
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,  
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap  
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,  
Lies defeated and buried deep  
Three or four hours unconscious there.

185

### *Cat's Meat*

H O, all you cats in all the street;  
Look out, it is the hour of meat:  
The little barrow is crawling along,  
And the meat-boy growling his fleshy song.

## HAROLD MONRO

Hurry, Ginger! Hurry, White!  
Don't delay to court or fight.

Wandering Tabby, vagrant Black,  
Yamble from adventure back!

Slip across the shining street,  
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Lift your tail and dip your feet;  
Find your penny—Meat! Meat!

Where's your mistress? Learn to purr:  
Pennies emanate from her.

Be to her, for she is Fate,  
Perfectly affectionate.

(You, domestic Pinkie-Nose,  
Keep inside and warm your tocs.)

Flurry, flurry in the street—  
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

186

### *Hearthstone*

I WANT nothing but your fire-side now.  
Friend, you are sitting there alone I know,  
And the quiet flames are licking up the soot,  
Or crackling out of some enormous root:  
All the logs on your hearth are four feet long.  
Everything in your room is wide and strong  
According to the breed of your hard thought.  
Now you are leaning forward; you have caught  
That great dog by his paw and are holding it,  
And he looks sidelong at you, stretching a bit,

## HAROLD MONRO

Drowsing with open eyes, huge, warm and wide,  
The full hearth-length on his slow-breathing side.  
Your book has dropped unnoticed: you have read  
So long you cannot send your brain to bed.  
The low quiet room and all its things are caught  
And linger in the meshes of your thought.  
(Some people think they know time cannot pause).  
Your eyes are closing now though not because  
Of sleep. You are searching something with your brain;  
You have let the old dog's paw drop down again. . . .  
Now suddenly you hum a little catch,  
And pick up the book. The wind rattles the latch;  
There's a patter of light cool rain and the curtain shakes;  
The silly dog growls, moves, and almost wakes.  
The kettle near the fire one moment hums.  
Then a long peace upon the whole room comes.  
So the sweet evening will draw to its bedtime end.  
I want nothing now but your fire-side, friend.

187

### *Bitter Sanctuary*

(1)

**S**HE lives in the porter's room; the plush is nicotined.  
Clients have left their photos there to perish.  
She watches through green shutters those who press  
To reach unconsciousness.

She licks her varnished thin magenta lips,  
She picks her foretooth with a finger nail,  
She pokes her head out to greet new clients, or  
To leave them (to what torture) waiting at the door.

## HAROLD MONRO

### (ii)

Heat has locked the heavy earth,  
Given strength to every sound,  
He, where his life still holds him to the ground,  
In anaesthesia, groaning for re-birth,  
Leans at the door.  
From out the house there comes the dullest flutter;  
A lackey; and thin giggling from behind that shutter.

### (iii)

His lost eyes lean to find and read the number.  
Follows his knuckled rap, and hesitating curse.  
He cannot wake himself; he may not slumber;  
While on the long white wall across the road  
Drives the thin outline of a dwindling hearse.

### (iv)

Now the door opens wide.

He: 'Is there room inside?'

She: 'Are you past the bounds of pain?'

He: 'May my body lie in vain

Among the dreams I cannot keep!'

She: 'Let him drink the cup of sleep.'

### (v)

Thin arms and ghostly hands; faint sky-blue eyes;  
Long drooping lashes, lids like full-blown moons,  
Clinging to any brink of floating skies:  
What hope is there? What fear?—Unless to wake and see  
Lingering flesh, or cold eternity.

## HAROLD MONRO

O yet some face, half living, brings

Far gaze to him and croons:

She: 'You're white. You are alone.

Can you not approach my sphere?'

He: 'I'm changing into stone.'

She: 'Would I were! Would *I* were!'

Then the white attendants fill the cup.

(vi)

In the morning through the world,

Watch the flunkies bring the coffee;

Watch the shepherds on the downs,

Lords and ladies at their toilet,

Farmers, merchants, frothing towns.

But look how he, unfortunate, now fumbles

Through unknown chambers, unheedful stumbles.

Can he evade the overshadowing night?

Are there not somewhere chinks of braided light?

(vii)

How do they leave who once are in those rooms?

Some may be found, they say, deeply asleep

In ruined tombs.

Some in white beds, with faces round them. Some

Wander the world, and never find a home.

188

*From 'Midnight Lamentation'*

WHEN you and I go down  
Breathless and cold,  
Our faces both worn back  
To earthly mould,



## HAROLD MONRO

How lonely we shall be!  
What shall we do,  
You without me,  
I without you?

I cannot bear the thought  
You, first, may die,  
Nor of how you will weep,  
Should I.  
We are too much alone;  
What can we do  
To make our bodies one:  
You, me; I, you?

We are most nearly born  
Of one same kind;  
We have the same delight,  
The same true mind.  
Must we then part, we part;  
Is there no way  
To keep a beating heart,  
And light of day?

I cannot find a way  
Through love and through;  
I cannot reach beyond  
Body, to you.  
When you or I must go  
Down evermore,  
There'll be no more to say  
—But a locked door.

HAROLD MONRO

189

*From 'Natural History'*

THE vixen woman,  
Long gone away,  
Came to haunt me  
Yesterday.

I sit and faint  
Through year on year.  
Was it yesterday  
I thought her dear?

Is hate then love?  
Can love be hate?  
Can they both rule  
In equal state?

Young, young she was,  
And young was I.  
We cried: Love! Come!  
Love heard our cry.

Her whom I loved  
I loathe to-day:  
The vixen woman  
Who came my way.

JOHN FREEMAN

1880-1929

190

*Asylum*

A HOUSE ringed round with trees and in the trees  
One lancet where the crafty light slides through;  
Comely, forsaken, unhusbanded,  
Blind-eyed and mute, unlamped and smokeless, yet  
Safe from the humiliation of death.

## JOHN FREEMAN

The porch is mossy, the roof-shingles are mossy,  
Green furs the window-sills and beards the drip-stones,  
A staring board, *To Let*, leans thigh-deep in  
Grave-clothes of grass; and no one sees or cares.

One day, may be, a school will open here,  
Or hospital, or home for fallen girls—  
A fallen house for fallen girls, may be.  
Laughter will shrill these silences away,  
Break every pane of peace with foolishness,  
And all the waiting, anxious memories  
Abashed will slink through the trees away, away.

So calm a house should not be given to noise,  
Nor scornful feet. But old men here should come,  
When apprehension first shall haunt their eyes.  
Fire should warm all the rooms and smoke the chimneys,  
Creeper renew its blood on the cold stones,  
A porch light shine on the rain-sodden path  
And watery ruts; and wise men here should find  
Asylum from the thought and fear of Death.

191

### *To end her Fear*

BE kind to her  
O Time.

She is too much afraid of you  
Because yours is a land unknown,  
Wintry, dark and lone.

'Tis not for her  
To pass  
Boldly upon your roadless waste.  
Roads she loves, and the bright ringing  
Of quick heels, and clear singing.

## JOHN FREEMAN

She is afraid  
Of Time,  
Forty to seventy sadly fearing . . .  
O, all those unknown years,  
And these sly, stoat-like fears!

Shake not on her  
Your snows,  
But on the rich, the proud, the wise  
Who have that to make them glow  
With warmth beneath the snow.

If she grow old  
At last,  
Be it yet unknown to her; that she  
Not until her last prayer is prayed  
May whisper, 'I am afraid!'

192

### *The Hounds*

FAR off a lonely hound  
Telling his loneliness all round  
To the dark woods, dark hills, and darker sea;  
And, answering, the sound  
Of that yet lonelier sea-hound  
Telling his loneliness to the solitary stars.  
Hearing, the kennelled hound  
Some neighbourhood and comfort found,  
And slept beneath the comfortless high stars.  
But that wild sea-hound  
Unkennelled, called all night all round—  
The unneighbourd and uncomforted cold sea.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

1881-1938

193

*Hope and Despair*

SAID God, 'You sisters, ere ye go  
Down among men, my work to do,  
I will on each a badge bestow:  
Hope I love best, and gold for her,  
Yet a silver glory for Despair,  
For she is my angel too.'

Then like a queen, Despair  
Put on the stars to wear.  
But Hope took ears of corn, and round  
Her temples in a wreath them bound.—  
Which think ye lookt the more fair?

194

*The Fear*

AS over muddy shores a dragon flock  
Went, in an early age from ours discrete,  
Before the grim race found oblivion meet;  
And as Time harden'd into iron rock  
That unclean mud, and into cliffs did lock  
The story of those terrifying feet  
With hooked claws and wrinkled scale complete,  
Till quarrying startles us with amaz'd shock:  
So there was something wont to pass along  
The plashy marge of early consciousness.  
Now the quagmires are turned to pavement strong;  
Those outer twilight regions bold I may  
Explore,—yet still I shudder with distress  
To find detested tracks of his old way.

195

*The Stream's Song*

**M**AKE way, make way,  
You thwarting stones;  
Room for my play,  
Serious ones.

Do you not fear,  
O rocks and boulders,  
To feel my laughter  
On your grave shoulders?

Do you not know  
My joy at length  
Will all wear out  
Your solemn strength?

You will not for ever  
Cumber my play;  
With joy and a song  
I clear my way.

Your faith of rock  
Shall yield to me,  
And be carried away  
By the song of my glee.

Crumble, crumble,  
Voiceless things;  
No faith can last  
That never sings.

For the last hour  
To joy belongs;  
The steadfast perish,  
But not the songs.

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Yet for a while  
Thwart me, O boulders;  
I need for laughter  
Your serious shoulders.

And when my singing  
Has razed you quite,  
I shall have lost  
Half my delight.

196

### *Mary and the Bramble*

THE great blue ceremony of the air  
Did a new morrow for the earth prepare;  
The silver troops of mist were almost crept  
Back to the streams where through the day they slept;  
And, high up on his tower of song, the glad  
Gallopings wings of a lark already had  
A message from the sun, to give bright warning  
That he would shortly make a golden morning.  
It was a dawn when the year is earliest.  
Mary, in her rapt girlhood, from her rest  
Came for the hour to wash her soul. Now she  
Beheld, with eyes like the rain-shadowed sea,  
Of late an urgency disturb the world;  
Her thought that, like a curtain wide unfurl'd  
With stir of a hurrying throng against it prest,  
Seen things flutter'd with spiritual haste  
Behind them, as a rush of winged zeal  
Made with its gusty passage shiver and reel,  
Like a loose weaving, all the work of sense.  
Surely not always could such vehemence

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Of Spirit stay all shrouded in the green  
Appearance of earth's knowledgeable mien:  
Ay, see this morning trembling like a sail!  
Can it still hold the strain? must it not fail  
Even now? for lo how it doth thrill and bend!  
Will not, as a torn cloth, earth's season rend  
Before this shaking wind of Heaven's speed,  
And show her God's obediences indeed  
Burning along behind it? Never yet  
Was such a fever in the frail earth set  
By those hid throngs posting behind its veil!

Unfearing were her eyes; yet would they quail  
A little when the curtain seemed nigh torn,  
The shining west of kind clear-weather'd morn,  
In pressure of near Spirit forcing it.  
And as she walkt, the marvel would permit  
Scarce any love for the earth's delighted dress.  
Through meadows flowering with happiness  
Went Mary, feeling not the air that laid  
Honours of gentle dew upon her head;  
Nor that the sun now loved with golden stare  
The marvellous behaviour of her hair,  
Bending with finer swerve from off her brow  
Than water which relents before a prow:  
Till in the shining darkness many a gleam  
Of secret bronze-red lustres answered him.

The Spirit of Life vaunted itself: 'Ho ye  
Who wear the Heavens, now look down to me!  
I too can praise. My dark encumberment  
Of earth, whereinto I was hardly sent,



## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

I have up-wielded as the fire wilds flame,  
And turned it into glory of God's name:  
Till now a praise as good as yours I can,  
For now my speech, the long-stammer'd being of Man.  
Rises into its mightiest, sweetest word.'  
Not vain his boast: for seemly to the Lord,  
Blue-robed and yellow-kerchieft, Mary went.  
There never was to God such worship sent  
By any angel in the Heavenly ways,  
As this that Life had utter'd for God's praise,  
This girlhood—as the service that Life said  
In the beauty and the manners of this maid.  
Never the harps of Heaven played such song  
As her grave walking through the grasses long.  
Yea, out of Jewry came the proof in her  
That the angel Life was God's best worshipper

Now in her vision'd walk beside a brake  
Is Mary passing, wherein brambles make  
A tangled malice, grown to such a riddle  
That any grimness crouching in the middle  
Were not espied. Bewildered was the place,  
Like a brain full of folly and disgrace;  
And with its thorny toils it seemed to be  
A naughty heart devising cruelty.  
Ready it was with all its small keen spite  
To catch at anything that walkt upright,  
Although a miching weasel safely went  
Therethrough. And close to this entanglement,  
This little world out of unkindness made,  
With eyes beyond her path young Mary strayed.

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

As an unheeded bramble's reach she crost,  
Her breast a spiny sinew did accost  
With eager thorns, tearing her dress to seize  
And harm her hidden white virginities.  
To it she spake, with such a gentle air  
That the thing might not choose but answer her.

'What meanest thou, O Bramble,  
So to hurt my breast?  
Why is thy sharp cruelty  
Against my heart prest?'

'How can I help, O Mary,  
Dealing wound to thee?  
Thou hast Heaven's favour:  
I am mortality.'

'If I, who am thy sister,  
Am in Heaven's love,  
If it be so, then should it not  
Thee to gladness move?'

'Nay, nay, it moves me only  
Quietly to wait,  
Till I can surely seize thy heart  
In my twisting hate.'

'Ah, thou hast pierced my paps, bramble,  
Thy thorns are in my blood;  
Tell me for why, thou cruel growth,  
Thy malice is so rude.'

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

'Thou art looking, Mary,  
Beyond the world to be:  
If I cannot grapple thee down to the world,  
I can injure thee.'

'Ah, thy wicked daggers now  
Into my nipple cling:  
It is like guilt, so to be held  
In thy harsh fingering.'

The little leaves were language still,  
And gave their voice to Mary's will;  
But till the bramble's word was said,  
Thorns clutcht hard upon the maid.  
'Yes, like guilt, for guilt am I,  
Sin and wrong and misery.  
For thy heart guilt is feeling;  
Hurt for which there is no healing  
Must the bramble do to thee,  
If thou wilt not guilty be.  
Know'st thou me? These nails of hate  
Are the fastenings of the weight  
Of substance which thy God did bind  
Upon thy upward-meaning mind.  
Life has greatly sworn to be  
High as the brows of God in thee;  
But I am heaviness, and I  
Would hold thee down from being high.  
Thou thyself by thy straining  
Hast made my weight a wicked thing;  
Here in the bramble now I sit  
And tear thy flesh with the spines of it.

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Yet into my desires come,  
And like a worshipping bridegroom  
I will turn thy life to dream,  
All delicious love to seem.  
But if in Heaven God shall wear  
Before any worship there  
Thy Spirit, and Life boasteth this,  
Thou must break through the injuries  
And shames I will about thee wind,  
The hooks and thickets of my kind;  
'The whole earth's nature will come to be  
Full of my purpose against thee:  
Yea, worse than a bramble's handling, ~~men~~  
Shall use thy bosom, Mary, then.  
And yet I know that by these scars  
I make thee better than the stars  
For God to wear; and thou wilt ride  
On the lusts that have thee tried,  
The murders that fell short of thee,  
Like charioting in a victory;  
Like shafted horses thou wilt drive  
The crimes that I on earth made thrive  
Against thee, into Heaven to draw  
Thy soul out of my heinous law.  
But now in midst of my growth thou art,  
And I have thee by the heart;  
And closer shall I seize on thee  
Even than this; a gallows-tree  
Shall bear a bramble-coil on high;  
Then twisted about thy soul am I,  
Then a withe of my will is bound  
Strangling thy very ghost around.'

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Homeward went Mary, nursing fearfully  
The bleeding badges of that cruelty.  
Now closer spiritual turbulence whirled  
Against her filmy vision of the world,  
Which was like shaken silk, so gravely leant  
The moving of that throng'd astonishment  
On the far side: the time was near at hand  
When Gabriel with the fiery-flower'd wand  
Would part the tissue of her bodily ken,  
And to the opening all God's shining men  
Would crowd to watch the message that he took  
To earthly life: 'Hail, Mary, that dost look  
Delightful to the Lord; I bid thee know  
That answering God's own love thy womb shall throe.'

## FRANK PEARCE STURM

197

### *Still-heart*

DREAD are the death-pale Kings  
Who bend to the oar,  
Dread is the voice that sings  
On the starless shore,  
Lamentations and woes:  
Cold on the wave  
Beautiful Still-heart goes  
To the rock-hewn grave.  
The limbs are bound, and the breasts  
That I kissed are cold;  
Beautiful Still-heart rests  
With the queens of old.

198

*Old Soldier*

WE wander now who marched before,  
Hawking our bran from door to door,  
While other men from the mill take their flour:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

Old, bare and sore, we look on the hound  
Turning upon the stiff frozen ground,  
Nosing the mould, with the night around:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

And we who once rang out like a bell,  
Have nothing now to show or to sell;  
Old bones to carry, old stories to tell:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

199

*A Drover*

TO Meath of the pastures,  
From wet hills by the sea,  
Through Leitrim and Longford,  
Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness  
Their slipping and breathing—  
I name them the by-ways  
They're to pass without heeding;

## PADRAIC COLUM

Then the wet, winding roads,  
Brown bogs with black water,  
And my thoughts on white ships  
And the King o' Spain's daughter.

O farmer, strong farmer!  
You can spend at the fair,  
But your face you must turn  
To your crops and your care;

And soldiers, red soldiers!  
You've seen many lands,  
But you walk two by two,  
And by captain's commands!

O the smell of the beasts,  
The wet wind in the morn,  
And the proud and hard earth  
Never broken for corn!

And the crowds at the fair,  
The herds loosened and blind,  
Loud words and dark faces,  
And the wild blood behind!

(O strong men with your best  
I would strive breast to breast,  
I could quiet your herds  
With my words, with my words!)

I will bring you, my kine,  
Where there's grass to the knee,  
But you'll think of scant croppings  
Harsh with salt of the sea.

PADRAIC COLUM

200

*The Poor Girl's Meditation*

I AM sitting here  
Since the moon rose in the night,  
Kindling a fire,  
And striving to keep it alight;  
The folk of the house are lying  
In slumber deep;  
The geese will be gabbling soon:  
The whole of the land is asleep.

May I never leave this world  
Until my ill-luck is gone;  
Till I have cows and sheep,  
And the lad that I love for my own;  
I would not think it long,  
The night I would lie at his breast,  
And the daughters of spite, after that,  
Might say the thing they liked best.

Love takes the place of hate,  
If a girl have beauty at all:  
On a bed that was narrow and high,  
A three-month I lay by the wall:  
When I bethought on the lad  
That I left on the brow of the hill,  
I wept from dark until dark,  
And my cheeks have the tear-tracks still.

And, O young lad that I love,  
I am no mark for your scorn;  
All you can say of me is  
Undowered I was born:



## PADRAIC COLUM

And if I've no fortune in hand,  
Nor cattle and sheep of my own,  
This I can say, O lad,  
I am fitted to lie my lone!

201

### *No Child*

I HEARD in the night the pigeons  
Stirring within their nest:  
The wild pigeons' stir was tender,  
Like a child's hand at the breast.  
I cried, 'O stir no more!  
(My breast was touched with tears)  
O pigeons, make no stir—  
A childless woman hears.'

## JOHN DRINKWATER

1882-1937

202

### *Moonlit Apples*

AT the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,  
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those  
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes  
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then  
There is no sound at the top of the house of men  
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again  
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;  
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams  
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,  
And quiet is the steep stair under.

## JOHN DRINKWATER

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep,  
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep  
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep  
On moon-washed apples of wonder.

203

### *Who were before me*

LONG time in some forgotten churchyard earth of Warwick-  
shire,  
My fathers in their generations lie beyond desire,  
And nothing breaks the rest, I know, of John Drinkwater now,  
Who left in sixteen-seventy his roan team at plough.

And James, son of John, is there, a mighty ploughman too,  
Skilled he was at thatching and the barleycorn brew,  
And he had a heart-load of sorrow in his day,  
But ten score of years ago he put it away.

Then Thomas came, and played a fiddle cut of mellow wood,  
And broke his heart, they say, for love that never came to good.  
A hundred winter peals and more have rung above his bed—  
O, poor eternal grief, so long, so lightly, comforted.

And in the gentle yesterday these were but glimmering tombs,  
Or tales to tell on fireside eves of legendary dooms;  
I being life while they were none, what had their dust to bring  
But cold intelligence of death upon my tides of Spring?

Now grief is in my shadow, and it seems well enough  
To be there with my fathers, where neither fear nor love  
Can touch me more, nor spite of men, nor my own teasing  
blame,

While the slow mosses weave an end of my forgotten name.

JAMES JOYCE

1882-1941

204 *A Flower given to my Daughter*

**F**RAIL the white rose and frail are  
Her hands that gave  
Whose soul is sere and paler  
Than time's wan wave.

Rosefrail and fair—yet frailest  
A wonder wild  
In gentle eyes thou veilest,  
My blueveined child.

*Trieste 1913.*

205 *Tutto è Sciolto*

**A** BIRDLESS heaven, seadusk, one lone star  
Piercing the west,  
As thou, fond heart, love's time, so faint, so far,  
Rememberest.

The clear young eyes' soft look, the candid brow,  
The fragrant hair,  
Falling as through the silence falleth now  
Dusk of the air.

Why then, remembering those shy  
Sweet lures, repine  
When the dear love she yielded with a sigh  
Was all but thine?

*Trieste 1914.*

JAMES JOYCE

206            *On the Beach at Fontana*

WIND whines and whines the shingle,  
The crazy pierstakes groan;  
A senile sea numbers each single  
Slimesilvered stone.

From whining wind and colder  
Grey sea I wrap him warm  
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder  
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending  
Darkness of fear above  
And in my heart how deep unending  
Ache of love!

*Trieste 1914.*

JAMES STEPHENS

207            *Deirdre*

1882-

D O not let any woman read this verse!  
It is for men, and after them their sons,  
And their sons' sons!

The time comes when our hearts sink utterly;  
When we remember Deirdre, and her tale,  
And that her lips are dust.

Once she did tread the earth: men took her hand;  
They looked into her eyes and said their say,  
And she replied to them.

## JAMES STEPHENS

More than two thousand years it is since she  
Was beautiful: she trod the waving grass;  
She saw the clouds.

Two thousand years! The grass is still the same  
The clouds as lovely as they were that time  
When Deirdre was alive.

But there has been again no woman born  
Who was so beautiful; not one so beautiful  
Of all the women born.

Let all men go apart and mourn together!  
No man can ever love her! Not a man  
Can dream to be her lover!

No man can bend before her! No man say—  
What could one say to her? There are no words  
That one could say to her!

Now she is but a story that is told  
Beside the fire! No man can ever be  
The friend of that poor queen!

208

### *Blue Blood*

WE thought at first, this man is a king for sure,  
Or the branch of a mighty and ancient and famous  
lineage

—That silly, sulky, illiterate, black-avised boor  
Who was hatched by foreign vulgarity under a hedge!

The good men of Clare were drinking his health in a flood,  
And gazing, with me, in awe at the princely lad;  
And asking each other from what bluest blueness of blood  
His daddy was squeezed, and the pa of the da of his dad?

## JAMES STEPHENS

We waited there, gaping and wondering, anxiously,  
Until he'd stop eating, and let the glad tidings out;  
And the slack-jawed booby proved to the hilt that he  
Was lout, son of lout, by old lout, and was da to a lout!

*(From the Irish.)*

209

### *A Glass of Beer*

**T**HE lanky hank of a she in the inn over there  
Nearly killed me for asking the loan of a glass of beer;  
May the devil grip the whey-faced slut by the hair,  
And beat bad manners out of her skin for a year.

That parboiled ape, with the toughest jaw you will see  
On virtue's path, and a voice that would rasp the dead,  
Came roaring and raging the minute she looked at me,  
And threw me out of the house on the back of my head!

If I asked her master he'd give me a cask a day;  
But she, with the beer at hand, not a gill would arrange!  
May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten, and may  
The High King of Glory permit her to get the mange.

*(From the Irish.)*

210

### *Egan O Rahilly*

**H**ERE in a distant place I hold my tongue;  
I am O Rahilly!

When I was young,  
Who now am young no more,  
I did not eat things picked up from the shore:  
The periwinkle, and the tough dog-fish  
At even-tide have got into my dish!

## JAMES STEPHENS

The great, where are they now! the great had said—  
This is not seemly! Bring to him instead  
That which serves his and serves our dignity—  
And that was done.

I am O Rahilly!

Here in a distant place he holds his tongue,  
Who once said all his say, when he was young!

*(From the Irish.)*

211

### *Inis Fál*

NOW may we turn aside and dry our tears!  
And comfort us! And lay aside our fears,  
For all is gone!

All comely quality!  
All gentleness and hospitality!  
All courtesy and merriment

Is gone!  
Our virtues, all, are withered every one!  
Our music vanished, and our skill to sing!  
Now may we quiet us and quit our moan!  
Nothing is whole that could be broke! No thing  
Remains to us of all that was our own.

*(From the Irish.)*

212

### *The Rivals*

I HEARD a bird at dawn  
Singing sweetly on a tree,  
That the dew was on the lawn,  
And the wind was on the lea;  
But I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me!

## JAMES STEPHENS

I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me  
That the dew was on the lawn,  
And the wind was on the lea!  
I was singing at the time,  
Just as prettily as he!

I was singing all the time,  
Just as prettily as he,  
About the dew upon the lawn,  
And the wind upon the lea!  
So I didn't listen to him,  
As he sang upon a tree!

213

### *In the Night*

**T**HERE always is a noise when it is dark!  
It is the noise of silence, and the noise  
Of blindness!

The noise of silence, and the noise of blindness  
Do frighten me!  
They hold me stark and rigid as a tree!

These frighten me!  
These hold me stark and rigid as a tree!  
Because at last their tumult is more loud  
Than thunder!

Because  
Their tumult is more loud than thunder  
They terrify my soul! They tear  
My heart asunder!



JAMES STEPHENS

214

*The Main-deep*

THE long-rólling,  
Steady-póuring,  
Deep-trenchéd  
Green billów:

The wide-topped,  
Unbróken,  
Green-glacid,  
Slow-sliding,

Cold-flushing,  
—On—on—on—  
Chill-rushing,  
Hush—hushing,

... Hush—hushing ...

SHRI PUROHIT SWAMI

215

*I Know that I am a Great Sinner*

1882-

I KNOW that I am a great sinner,  
That there is no remedy,  
But let Thy will be done.  
If my Lord wishes He need not speak to me.  
All I ask is that of His bounty  
He walk by my side through my life.  
I will behave well  
Though He never embrace me—  
O Lord, Thou art my Master  
And I Thy slave.

(From his own Hindi.)

216

*Shall I do this*

SHALL I do this?  
Shall I do that?  
My hands are empty,  
All that talk amounts to nothing.  
Never will I do anything,  
Never, never will I do anything;  
Having been commanded to woo Thee  
I should keep myself wide awake  
Or else sleep away my life.  
I am unfit to do the first,  
But I can sleep with open eyes,  
And I can always pretend to laugh,  
And I can weep for the state I am in;  
But my laugh has gone for good,  
And gone the charm of tears.

*(From his own Urdu.)*

217

*A Miracle indeed*

A MIRACLE indeed!  
Thou art Lord of All Power.  
I asked a little power,  
Thou gavest me a begging-bowl.

*(From his own Urdu.)*

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

1884-1915

218

*Santorin*

*(A Legend of the Ægean)*

‘WHO are you, Sea Lady,  
And where in the seas are we?’

I have too long been steering

By the flashes in your eyes.

Why drops the moonlight through my heart,

And why so quietly

Go the great engines of my boat

As if their souls were free?’

‘Oh ask me not, bold sailor;

Is not your ship a magic ship

That sails without a sail:

Are not these isles the Isles of Greece

And dust upon the sea?

But answer me three questions

And give me answers three.

What is your ship?’ ‘A British.’

‘And where may Britain be?’

‘Oh it lies north, dear lady;

It is a small country.’

‘Yet you will know my lover,

Though you live far away:

And you will whisper where he has gone,

That lily boy to look upon

And whiter than the spray.

‘How should I know your lover,

Lady of the sea?’

## JAMES ELROY FLECKER

'Alexander, Alexander,  
The King of the World was he.'  
'Weep not for him, dear lady,  
But come aboard my ship.  
So many years ago he died,  
He's dead as dead can be.'  
'O base and brutal sailor  
To lie this lie to me.  
His mother was the foam-foot  
Star-sparkling Aphrodite;  
His father was Adonis  
Who lives away in Lebanon,  
In stony Lebanon, where blooms  
His red anemone.  
But where is Alexander,  
The soldier Alexander,  
My golden love of olden days  
The King of the world and me?'  
She sank into the moonlight  
And the sea was only sea.

219

### *The Old Ships*

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,  
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep  
For Famagusta and the hidden sun  
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;  
And all those ships were certainly so old  
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,  
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,  
The pirate Genoese

## JAMES ELROY FLECKER

Hell-raked them till they rolled  
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.  
But now through friendly seas they softly run,  
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,  
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,  
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn  
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,  
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;  
And, wonder's breath indrawn,  
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same  
(Fished up beyond *Ææa*, patched up new  
—Stern painted brighter blue—)  
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came  
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)  
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,  
And with great lies about his wooden horse  
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows?  
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain  
To see the mast burst open with a rose,  
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

### 220 *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*

#### PROLOGUE

WE who with songs beguile your pilgrimage  
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,  
We Poets of the proud old lineage  
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not why,—

## JAMES ELROY FLECKER

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales  
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,  
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,  
And winds and shadows fall toward the West:

And there the world's first huge white-bearded kings  
In dim glades sleeping, murmur in their sleep,  
And closer round their breasts the ivy clings,  
Cutting its pathway slow and red and deep.

### (ii)

And how beguile you? Death has no repose  
Warmer and deeper than that Orient sand  
Which hides the beauty and bright faith of those  
Who made the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

And now they wait and whiten peaceably,  
Those conquerors, those poets, those so fair:  
They know time comes, not only you and I,  
But the whole world shall whiten, here or there;

When those long caravans that cross the plain  
With dauntless feet and sound of silver bells  
Put forth no more for glory or for gain,  
Take no more solace from the palm-girt wells.

When the great markets by the sea shut fast  
All that calm Sunday that goes on and on:  
When even lovers find their peace at last,  
And Earth is but a star, that once had shone.

*From 'The Skaian Gate'*

**H**ECTOR, the captain bronzed, from simple fight  
 Passing to herd his trembling pallid host,  
 Scorned a blind beggar in the Skaian Gate,  
 Rattled a blade, then flung his rags a gift.  
 And, turning his void eyes to the black sun,  
 In price of alms the beggar prayed—'Long light,  
 Loud name attend, O captain, your stern ghost:  
 Blind prayers may not be lost,  
 For of each one  
 Zeus keeps the count and token.'

Homer blind  
 Filled the huge world with Hector like a wind.  
 Comely, clean of the crust  
 Of Earth like bud from a root,  
 Blade clear of its rust,  
 Smouldering crest afire,  
 Out of darkness. From dust  
 Iron risen in ire;  
 To a lifted horn's long note  
 Hector's afoot!

Words ghostly; the windy ones;  
 Thin tones:—outwearing stones  
 Tall Troy and Skaian Gate  
 Helen and Hector's hate—  
 Mouth of air; ghost of breath;  
 What a stone you have builded, what bronze  
 You have moulded, blown out of death!

GEOFFREY SCOTT

222

*What was Solomon's Mind?*

WHAT was Solomon's mind?  
If he was wise in truth,  
'Twas something hard to find  
And delicate: a mouse  
Tingling, and small, and smooth,  
Hid in vast haunted house.

By smallness quite beset—  
Stillest when most alive—  
Shrinking to smaller yet  
And livelier, until,  
Gladly diminutive,  
Still smoother, and more still,

He centres to an Eye,  
A clean expectancy,  
That, from the narrow black  
Safe velvet of his crack,  
Quivering, quiet, dumb,  
Drinks up the lighted room.

223

*All our Joy is enough*

ALL we make is enough  
Barely to seem  
A bee's din,  
A beetle-scheme—  
Sleepy stuff  
For God to dream:  
Begin.



## GEOFFREY SCOTT

All our joy is enough  
At most to fill  
A thimble cup  
A little wind puff  
Can shake, can spill:  
Fill it up;  
Be still.

All we know is enough;  
Though written wide,  
Small spider yet  
With tangled stride  
Will soon be off  
The page's side:  
Forget.

224

### *Frutta di Mare*

I AM a sea-shell flung  
Up from the ancient sea;  
Now I lie here, among  
Roots of a tamarisk tree;  
No one listens to me.

I sing to myself all day  
In a husky voice, quite low,  
Things the great fishes say  
And you most need to know;  
All night I sing just so.

GEOFFREY SCOTT

But lift me from the ground,  
And hearken at my rim,  
Only your sorrow's sound  
Amazed, perplexed and dim,  
Comes coiling to the brim;

For what the wise whales ponder  
Awaking out from sleep,  
The key to all your wonder,  
The answers of the deep,  
These to myself I keep.

SIR JOHN SQUIRE

1884-

225      *Ballade of the Poetic Life*

THE fat men go about the streets,  
The politicians play their game,  
The prudent bishops sound retreats  
And think the martyrs much to blame;  
Honour and love are halt and lame  
And Greed and Power are deified,  
The wild are harnessed by the tame;  
For this the poets lived and died.

Shelley's a trademark used on sheets:  
Aloft the sky in words of flame  
We read 'What porridge had John Keats?  
Why, Brown's! A hundred years the same!  
Arcadia's an umbrella frame,  
Milton's a toothpaste; from the tide  
Sappho's been dredged to rouge my Dame—  
For this the poets lived and died.

## SIR JOHN SQUIRE

And yet, to launch ideal fleets  
Lost regions in the stars to claim,  
To face all ruins and defeats,  
To sing a beaten world to shame,  
To hold each bright impossible aim  
Deep in the heart; to starve in pride  
For fame, and never know their fame—  
For this the poets lived and died.

### *Envoi*

Princess, inscribe beneath my name  
'He never begged, he never sighed,  
He took his medicine as it came'—  
For this the poets lived—and died.

## WILLIAM FORCE STEAD

226

### *How Infinite are Thy Ways*

1884—

**I** THOUGHT the night without a sound was falling;  
But standing still,  
No stem or leaf I stirred,  
And soon in the hedge a cricket chirred;  
A robin filled a whole silence with calling;  
An owl went hovering by,  
Hunting the spacious twilight with tremulous cry;  
Far off where the woods were dark  
A ranging dog began to bark;  
Down by the water-mill,  
A cock, boasting his might,  
Shouted a loud good-night;  
A heifer lowed upon the lone-tree hill.

## WILLIAM FORCE STEAD

I had not known, were I not still,  
How infinite are Thy ways.  
I wondered what Thy life could be,  
O Thou unknown Immensity:  
Voice after voice, and every voice was Thine.  
So I stood wondering,  
Until a child began to sing,  
Going late home, awed by the gathering haze. . . .  
I said, Her life at one with Thine,  
At one with mine.  
But compassing Thy many voices now,  
Lo I, somehow,  
Am Thou.

### 227     *I closed my Eyes To-day and saw*

**I** CLOSED my eyes to-day and saw  
A dark land fringed with flame,  
A sky of grey with ochre swirls  
Down to the dark land came.

No wind, no sound, no man, no bird,  
No grass, no hill, no wood:  
Tall as a pine amid the plain  
One giant sunflower stood.

Its disk was large with ripened seed:  
A red line on the grey,  
The flames, as yet afar, I knew  
Would gnaw the world away.

WILLIAM FORCE STEAD

In vain the seeds were ripe; the stem,  
With singed leaves hung around,  
Relaxed; and all the big flower stooped  
And stared upon the ground.

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

1885-1930

228

*Work*

THERE is no point in work  
unless it absorbs you  
like an absorbing game.

If it doesn't absorb you  
if it's never any fun,  
don't do it.

When a man goes out into his work  
he is alive like a tree in spring,  
he is living, not merely working.

When the Hindus weave thin wool into long, long lengths of  
stuff  
with their thin dark hands and their wide dark eyes and their  
still souls absorbed  
they are like slender trees putting forth leaves, a long white  
web of living leaf,  
the tissue they weave,  
and they clothe themselves in white as a tree clothes itself in its  
own foliage.

## DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

As with cloth, so with houses, ships, shoes, wagons or cups or  
loaves.

Men might put them forth as a snail its shell, as a bird that  
leans

its breast against its nest, to make it round,  
as the turnip models his round root, as the bush makes  
flowers and gooseberries,

putting them forth, not manufacturing them,  
and cities might be as once they were, bowers grown out from  
the busy bodies of people.

And so it will be again, men will smash the machines.

At last, for the sake of clothing himself in his own leaf-like  
cloth

tissued from his life,  
and dwelling in his own bowery house, like a beaver's  
nibbled mansion

and drinking from cups that came off his fingers like flowers  
off their five-fold stem,

he will cancel the machines we have got.

229

### *Hymn to Priapus*

MY love lies underground  
With her face upturned to mine,  
And her mouth unclosed in a last long kiss  
That ended her life and mine.

I dance at the Christmas party  
Under the mistletoe  
Along with a ripe, slack country lass  
Jostling to and fro.

## DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

The big, soft country lass,  
Like a loose sheaf of wheat  
Slipped through my arms on the threshing floor  
At my feet.

The warm, soft country lass,  
Sweet as an armful of wheat  
At threshing-time broken, was broken  
For me, and ah, it was sweet!

Now I am going home  
Fulfilled and alone,  
I see the great Orion standing  
Looking down.

He's the star of my first beloved  
Love-making.  
The witness of all that bitter-sweet  
Heart-aching.

Now he sees this as well,  
This last commission.  
Nor do I get any look  
Of admonition.

He can add the reckoning up  
I suppose, between now and then,  
Having walked himself in the thorny, difficult  
Ways of men.

He has done as I have done  
No doubt:  
Remembered and forgotten  
Turn and about.

## DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

My love lies underground  
With her face upturned to mine,  
And her mouth unclosed in the last long kiss  
That ended her life and mine.

She fares in the stark immortal  
Fields of death;  
I in these goodly, frozen  
Fields beneath.

Something in me remembers  
And will not forget.  
The stream of my life in the darkness  
Deathward set!

And something in me has forgotten,  
Has ceased to care.  
Desire comes up, and contentment  
Is debonair.

I, who am worn and careful,  
How much do I care?  
How is it I grin then, and chuckle  
Over despair?

Grief, grief, I suppose and sufficient  
Grief makes us free  
To be faithless and faithful together  
As we have to be.

230

### *Twilight*

**D**ARKNESS comes out of the earth  
And swallows dip into the pallor of the west;  
From the hay comes the clamour of children's mirth;  
Wanes the old palimpsest.



DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

The night-stock oozes scent,  
And a moon-blue moth goes flittering by:  
All that the worldly day has meant  
Wastes like a lie.

The children have forsaken their play;  
A single star in a veil of light  
Glimmers: litter of day  
Is gone from sight.

231                    *Suburbs on a Hazy Day*

O STIFFLY shapen houses that change not,  
What conjurer's cloth was thrown across you, and  
raised  
To show you thus transfigured, changed,  
Your stuff all gone, your menace almost rased?  
Such resolute shapes so harshly set  
In hollow blocks and cubes deformed, and heaped  
In void and null profusion, how is this?  
In what strong aqua regia now are you steeped?  
That you lose the brick-stuff out of you  
And hover like a presentment, fading faint  
And vanquished, evaporate away  
To leave but only the merest possible taint!

232                    *Sorrow*

WHY does the thin grey strand  
Floating up from the forgotten  
Cigarette between my fingers,  
Why does it trouble me?

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

Ah, you will understand;  
When I carried my mother downstairs,  
A few times only, at the beginning  
Of her soft-foot malady,

I should find, for a reprimand  
To my gaiety, a few long grey hairs  
On the breast of my coat; and one by one  
I watched them float up the dark chimney.

233                    *In Trouble and Shame*

I LOOK at the swaling sunset  
And wish I could go also  
Through the red doors beyond the black-purple bar.

I wish that I could go  
Through the red doors where I could put off  
My shame like shoes in the porch,  
My pain like garments,  
And leave my flesh discarded lying  
Like luggage of some departed traveller  
Gone one knows not whither.

Then I would turn round,  
And seeing my cast-off body lying like lumber,  
I would laugh with joy.

234 *The River-merchant's Wife: a Letter*

WHILE my hair was still cut straight across my forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
Forever and forever and forever.  
Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,  
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,  
And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
Over the grass in the West garden;

## EZRA POUND

They hurt me. I grow older.  
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come out to meet you  
    As far as Cho-fu-Sa.  
                    (*From the Chinese of Rihaku.*)

### 235 *From 'Homage to Sextus Propertius'*

WHEN, when, and whenever death closes our eyelids,  
    Moving naked over Acheron  
Upon the one raft, victor and conquered together,  
Marius and Jugurtha together,  
                    one tangle of shadows.  
Caesar plots against India,  
Tigris and Euphrates shall, from now on, flow at his bidding,  
Tibet shall be full of Roman policemen,  
The Parthians shall get used to our statuary  
                    and acquire a Roman religion;

One raft on the veiled flood of Acheron,  
    Marius and Jugurtha together.  
Nor at my funeral either will there be any long trail,  
                    bearing ancestral lares and images;  
No trumpets filled with my emptiness,  
Nor shall it be on an Atalic bed;  
    The perfumed cloths shall be absent.  
A small plebeian procession.  
    Enough, enough and in plenty  
There will be three books at my obsequies  
Which I take, my not unworthy gift, to Persephone.

## EZRA POUND

You will follow the bare scarified breast  
Nor will you be weary of calling my name, nor too weary  
    To place the last kiss on my lips  
When the Syrian onyx is broken.

    'He who is now vacant dust  
    'Was once the slave of one passion:'  
Give that much inscription  
    'Death why tardily come?'

You, sometimes, will lament a lost friend,  
    For it is a custom:  
This care for past men,

Since Adonis was gored in Idalia, and the Cytherean  
Ran crying with out-spread hair,  
    In vain, you call back the shade,  
In vain, Cynthia. Vain call to unanswering shadow,  
    Small talk comes from small bones.

236

### *Canto XVII*

SO that the vines burst from my fingers  
And the bees weighted with pollen  
Move heavily in the vine-shoots:  
    chirr—chirr—chir-rikk—a purring sound,  
And the birds sleepily in the branches.  
    ZAGREUS! IO ZAGREUS!  
With the first pale-clear of the heaven  
And the cities set in their hills,  
And the goddess of the fair knees  
Moving there, with the oak-wood behind her,

## EZRA POUND

The green slope, with white hounds  
                leaping about her;  
And thence down to the creek's mouth, until evening,  
Flat water before me,  
                and the trees growing in water,  
Marble trunks out of stillness,  
On past the palazzi,  
                in the stillness,  
The light now, not of the sun.  
                Chrysophrase,  
And the water green clear, and blue clear;  
On, to the great cliffs of amber.

Between them,

Cave of Nerea,  
         she like a great shell curved,  
 And the boat drawn without sound,  
 Without odour of ship-work,  
 Nor bird-cry, nor any noise of wave moving,  
 Nor splash of porpoise, nor any noise of wave moving,  
 Within her cave, Nerea,

she like a great shell curved

In the suavity of the rock,  
  cliff green-gray in the far,  
In the near, the gate-cliffs of amber,  
And the wave

green clear, and blue clear,  
And the cave salt-white, and glare-purple,  
cool, porphyry smooth,  
the rock sea-worn.

No gull-cry, no sound of porpoise,  
Sand as of malachite, and no cold there,  
the light not of the sun.

## EZRA POUND

Zagreus, feeding his panthers,  
the turf clear as on hills under light.  
And under the almond-trees, gods,  
with them, *choros nympharum*. Gods,  
Hermes and Athene,

As shaft of compass,  
Between them, trembled—  
To the left is the place of fauns,  
*sylva nympharum*;

The low wood, moor-scrub,  
the doe, the young spotted deer,  
leap up through the broom-plants,  
as dry leaf amid yellow.

And by one cut of the hills,  
the great alley of Memnons.

Beyond, sea, crests seen over dune  
Night sea churning shingle,  
To the left, the alley of cypress.

A boat came,

One man holding her sail,  
Guiding her with oar caught over gunwale, saying:

“There, in the forest of marble,  
the stone trees—out of water—  
the arbours of stone—  
marble leaf, over leaf,  
silver, steel over steel,  
silver beaks rising and crossing,  
prow set against prow,  
stone, ply over ply,  
the gilt beams flare of an evening’

Borso, Carmagnola, the men of craft, *i vitrei*,  
Thither, at one time, time after time,

## EZRA POUND

And the waters richer than glass,  
Bronze gold, the blaze over the silver,  
Dye-pots in the torch-light,  
The flash of wave under prows,  
And the silver beaks rising and crossing.  
    Stone trees, white and rose-white in the darkness,  
Cypress there by the towers,  
    Drift under hulls in the night.

    ‘In the gloom the gold  
Gathers the light about it.’ . . .

Now supine in burrow, half over-arched bramble,  
One eye for the sea, through that peek-hole,  
Gray light, with Athene.  
Zothar and her elephants, the gold loin-cloth,  
The sistrum, shaken, shaken,  
    the cohort of her dancers.  
And Aletha, by bend of the shore,  
    with her eyes seaward,  
    and in her hands sea-wrack  
Salt-bright with the foam.  
Koré through the bright meadow,  
    with green-gray dust in the grass:  
‘For this hour, brother of Circe.’  
Arm laid over my shoulder,  
Saw the sun for three days, the sun fulvid,  
As a lion lift over sand-plain;  
    and that day,  
And for three days, and none after,  
Splendour, as the splendour of Hermes,  
And shipped thence  
    to the stone place,





## ARTHUR WALEY

Next we rested in the shadow of the Stone Shrine.<sup>1</sup>  
The shrine-room was scarce a cubit long,  
With doors and windows unshuttered and unbarred.  
I peered down, but could not see the dead;  
Stalactites hung like a woman's hair.  
Waked from sleep, a pair of white bats  
Fled from the coffin with a whirr of snowy wings.  
I turned away, and saw the Temple gate—  
Scarlet eaves flanked by steeps of green;  
'Twas as though a hand had ripped the mountain-side  
And filled the cleft with a temple's walls and towers.  
Within the gate, no level ground;  
Little ground, but much empty sky.  
Cells and cloisters, terraces and spires  
High and low, followed the jut of the hill.  
On rocky plateaux with no earth to hold  
Were trees and shrubs, gnarled and very lean.  
Roots and stems stretched to grip the stone;  
Humped and bent, they writhed like a coiling snake.  
In broken ranks pine and cassia stood,  
Through the four seasons forever shady-green.  
On tender twigs and delicate branches breathing  
A quiet music played like strings in the wind.  
Never pierced by the light of sun or moon,  
Green locked with green, shade clasping shade.  
A hidden bird sometimes softly sings;  
Like a cricket's chirp sounds its muffled song.  
  
At the Strangers' Arbour a while we stayed our steps;  
We sat down, but had no mind to rest.  
In a little while we had opened the northern door.

<sup>1</sup> Where the mummified bodies of priests were kept, in miniature temples.

## ARTHUR WALEY

Ten thousand leagues suddenly stretched at our feet!  
Brushing the eaves, shredded rainbows swept;  
Circling the beams, clouds spun and whirled.  
Through red sunlight white rain fell;  
Azure and storm swam in a blended stream.  
In a wild green clustered grasses and trees,  
The eye's orbit swallowed the plain of Ch'in.  
Wei River was too small to see;  
The Mounds of Han,<sup>1</sup> littler than a clenched fist.  
I looked back; a line of red fence,  
Broken and twisting, marked the way we had trod.  
Far below, toiling one by one,  
Later climbers straggled on the face of the hill.

Straight before me were many Treasure Towers,  
Whose wind-bells at the four corners sang.  
At door and window, cornice and architrave,  
'Kap, kap,' the tinkle of gold and jade.  
Some say that here the Buddha Kāśyapa<sup>2</sup>  
Long ago quitted Life and Death.  
Still they keep his iron begging-bowl,  
With the furrow of his fingers chiselled deep at the base.  
To the east there opens the Jade Image Hall,  
Where white Buddhas sit like serried trees.  
We shook from our garments the journey's grime and dust,  
And bowing worshipped those faces of frozen snow  
Whose white cassocks like folded hoar-frost hung,  
Whose beaded crowns glittered like a shower of hail.  
We looked closer; surely Spirits willed  
This handicraft, never chisel carved!

<sup>1</sup> The tombs of the Han Emperors.

<sup>2</sup> Lived about 600,000,000,000 years ago and achieved Buddhahood at the age of 20,000.

## ARTHUR WALEY

Next we climbed to the Chamber of Kuan-yin;<sup>1</sup>  
From afar we sniffed its odours of sandal-wood.  
At the top of the steps each doffed his shoes;  
With bated stride we crossed the Jasper Hall.  
The Jewelled Mirror on six pillars propped,  
The Four Seats cased in hammered gold  
Through the black night glowed with beams of their own,  
Nor had we need to light candle or lamp.  
These many treasures in concert nodded and swayed—  
Banners of coral, pendants of cornaline.  
When the wind came, jewels chimed and sang  
Softly, softly like the music of Paradise.  
White pearls like frozen dewdrops hanging;  
Dark rubies spilt like clots of blood,  
Spangled and sown on the Buddha's twisted hair,  
Together fashioned his Sevenfold Jewel-crown.  
In twin vases of pallid tourmaline  
(Their colour colder than the waters of an autumn stream)  
The calcined relics of Buddha's Body rest—  
Rounded pebbles, smooth as the Specular Stone.  
A jade flute, by angels long ago  
Borne as a gift to the Garden of Jetavan!<sup>2</sup>  
It blows a music sweet as the crane's song  
That Spirits of Heaven earthward well might draw.

It was at autumn's height,  
The fifteenth day and the moon's orbit full.  
Wide I flung the three eastern gates;

<sup>1</sup> One of the self-denying Bodhisattvas who abstain from entering Buddhahood in order better to assist erring humanity. In Sanskrit, Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>2</sup> Near Benares; here Buddha preached most of his Sūtras and the first monastery was founded.

## ARTHUR WALEY

A golden spectre walked at the chapel-door.  
And jewel-beams now with moonbeams strove,  
In freshness and beauty darting a crystal light  
That cooled the spirit and limbs of those it touched,  
Nor all night-long needed they to rest.  
At dawn I sought the road to the Southern Tope,  
Where wild bamboos nodded in clustered grace.  
In the lonely forest no one crossed my path;  
Beside me faltered a cold butterfly.

Mountain fruits whose names I did not know  
With their prodigal bushes hedged the pathway in;  
The hungry here copious food had found;  
Idly I plucked, to test sour and sweet.

South of the road, the Spirit of the Blue Dell,<sup>1</sup>  
With his green umbrella and white paper pence!  
When the year is closing, the people are ordered to grow,  
As herbs of offering, marsil and motherwort;  
So sacred the place, that never yet was stained  
Its pure earth with sacrificial blood.

In a high cairn four or five rocks  
Dangerously heaped, deep-scarred and heeling—  
With what purpose did he that made the World  
Pile them here at the eastern corner of the cliff?  
Their slippery flank no foot has marked,  
But mosses stipple like a flowered writing-scroll.  
I came to the cairn, I climbed it right to the top;  
Beneath my feet a measureless chasm dropped.  
My eyes were dizzy, hand and knee quogged—  
I did not dare bend my head and look.

<sup>1</sup> A native, non-Buddhist deity.

## ARTHUR WALEY

A boisterous wind rose from under the rocks,  
Seized me with it and tore the ground from my feet.  
My shirt and robe fanned like mighty wings,  
And wide-spreading bore me like a bird to the sky.  
High about me, triangular and sharp,  
Like a cluster of sword-points many summits rose.  
The white mist that struck them in its airy course  
They tore asunder, and carved a patch of blue.

And now the sun was sinking in the north-west;  
His evening beams from a crimson globe he shed,  
Till far beyond the great fields of green  
His sulphurous disk suddenly down he drove.

And now the moon was rising in the south-east;  
In waves of coolness the night air flowed.  
From the grey bottom of the hundred-fathom pool  
Shines out the image of the moon's golden disk!  
Blue as its name, the Lan River flows  
Singing and plashing forever day and night.  
I gazed down; like a green finger-ring  
In winding circuits it follows the curves of the hill;  
Sometimes spreading to a wide, lazy stream,  
Sometimes striding to a foamy cataract.  
Out from the deepest and clearest pool of all,  
In a strange froth the Dragon's-spittle<sup>1</sup> flows.  
I bent down; a dangerous ladder of stones  
Paved beneath me a sheer and dizzy path.  
I gripped the ivy, I walked on fallen trees,  
Tracking the monkeys who came to drink at the stream.  
Like a whirl of snowflakes the startled herons rose,  
In damask dances the red sturgeon leapt.

<sup>1</sup> Ambergris.

## ARTHUR WALEY

For a while I rested, then plunging in the cool stream,  
From my weary body I washed the stains away.  
Deep or shallow, all was crystal clear;  
I watched through the water my own thighs and feet.  
Content I gazed at the stream's clear bed;  
Wondered, but knew not, whence its waters flowed.

The eastern bank with rare stones is rife;  
In serried courses the dusky chrysoprase,  
That outward turns a smooth, glossy face;  
In its deep core secret diamonds<sup>1</sup> lie.  
Pien of Ch'u<sup>2</sup> died long ago,  
And rare gems are often cast aside.  
Sometimes a radiance leaks from the hill by night  
To link its beams with the brightness of moon and stars.

At the central dome, where the hills highest rise,  
The sky is pillared on a column of green jade;  
Where even the spotty lizard cannot climb  
Can I, a man, foothold hope to find?  
In the top is hollowed the White-lotus lake;  
With purple cusps the clear waves are crowned.  
The name I heard, but the place I could not reach;  
Beyond the region of mortal things it lies.

And standing here, a flat rock I saw,  
Cubit-square, like a great paving-stone,  
Midway up fastened in the cliff-wall;  
And down below it, a thousand-foot drop.

<sup>1</sup> The stone mentioned (*yü-fan*), though praised by Confucius and used in the ceremonies of his native state, cannot be identified. Its name evokes vague ideas of rarity and beauty.

<sup>2</sup> Suffered mutilation because he had offered to his prince a gem which experts rejected. Afterwards it turned out to be genuine.

## ARTHUR WALEY

Here they say that a Master in ancient days  
Sat till he conquered the concepts of Life and Death.  
The place is called the Settled Heart Stone;  
By aged men the tale is still told.

I turned back to the Shrine of Fairies' Tryst;  
Thick creepers covered its old walls.  
Here it was that a mortal<sup>1</sup> long ago  
On new-grown wings flew to the dark sky;  
Westward a garden of agaric and rue  
Faces the terrace where his magic herbs were dried.  
And sometimes still on clear moonlit nights  
In the sky is heard a yellow-crane's voice.

I turned and sought the Painted Dragon Hall,  
Where the bearded figures of two ancient men  
By the Holy Lectern at sermon-time are seen  
In gleeful worship to nod their hoary heads;  
Who, going home to their cave beneath the river,  
Of weather-dragons the writhing shapes assume.  
When rain is coming they puff a white smoke  
In front of the steps, from a round hole in the stone.

Once a priest who copied the Holy Books  
(Of purpose dauntless and body undefiled)  
Loved yonder pigeons, that far beyond the clouds  
Fly in flocks beating a thousand wings.  
They came and dropped him water in his writing-bowl;  
Then sipped afresh in the river under the rocks.  
Each day thrice they went and came,  
Nor ever once missed their wonted time.  
When the Book was finished, he was named 'Holy Priest';  
For like glory in vain his fellows vied.

<sup>1</sup> The wizard Wang Shun, after whom the hill is named.



## ARTHUR WALEY

He sang the hymns of the Lotus Blossom Book,<sup>1</sup>  
Again and again, a thousand, a million times.  
His body withered, but his mouth still was strong,  
Till his tongue turned to a red lotus-flower.

His bones no more are seen;  
But the rock where he sat is still carved with his fame.  
On a plastered wall are frescoes from the hand of Wu,<sup>2</sup>  
Whose pencil-colours never-fading glow.  
On a white screen is writing by the master Ch'u,<sup>3</sup>  
The tones subtle as the day it first dried.

Magical prospects, monuments divine—  
Now all were visited.  
Here we had tarried five nights and days;  
Yet homeward now with loitering footsteps trod.  
I, that a man of the wild hills was born,  
Floundering fell into the web of the World's net.  
Caught in its trammels, they forced me to study books;  
Twitched and tore me down the path of public life.  
Soon I rose to be Bachelor of Arts;  
In the Record Office, in the Censorate I sat.  
My simple bluntness did not suit the times;  
A profitless servant, I drew the royal pay.  
The sense of this made me always ashamed,  
And every pleasure a deep brooding dimmed.  
To little purpose I sapped my heart's strength,  
Till seeming age shrank my youthful frame.  
From the very hour I doffed belt and cap  
I marked how with them sorrow slank away.

<sup>1</sup> The verses of the Saddharmapundarika Sūtra, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 21.

<sup>2</sup> The great eighth-century painter, Wu Tao-tzū.

<sup>3</sup> The calligrapher, Ch'u Sui-liang, A.D. 596-658.

## ARTHUR WALEY

But now that I wander in the freedom of streams and hills  
My heart to its folly comfortably yields.  
Like a wild deer that has torn the hunter's net  
I range abroad by no halters barred.  
Like a captive fish loosed into the Great Sea  
To my marble basin I shall not ever return.  
My body girt in the hermit's single dress,  
My hand holding the Book of Chuang Chou,  
On these hills at last I am come to dwell,  
Loosed forever from the shackles of a trim world.  
I have lived in labour forty years and more;  
If Life's remnant vacantly I spend,  
Seventy being our span, then thirty years  
Of idleness are still left to live.

*(From the Chinese of Po Chü-i.)*

## FRANCES CORNFORD

1886-

238

### *A Glimpse*

O GRASSES wet with dew, yellow fallen leaves,  
Smooth-shadowed waters Milton loved, green banks,  
Arched bridges, rooks, and rain-leaved willow-trees,  
Stone, serious familiar colleges,  
For ever mine.

The figure of a scholar carrying back  
Books to the library—absorbed, content,  
Seeming as everlasting as the elms  
Bark-wrinkled, puddled round their roots, the bells,  
And the far shouting in the football fields.

The same since I was born, the same to be  
When all my children's children grow old men.

FRANCES CORNFORD

239

*London Despair*

**T**HIS endless gray-roofed city, and each heart—  
Each with its problems, urgent and apart—  
And hearts unborn that wait to come again,  
Each to its problems, urgent, and such pain.  
  
Why cannot all of us together—why?—  
Achieve the one simplicity: to die?

240

*Near an old Prison*

**W**HEN we would reach the anguish of the dead,  
Whose bones alone, irrelevant, are dust,  
Out of ourselves it seems we must, we must  
To some obscure but ever-bleeding thing  
Unreconciled, a needed solace bring,  
Like a resolving chord, like daylight shed.  
  
Or through thick time must we reach back in vain  
To inaccessible pain?

241 *To a Fat Lady seen from the Train*

**O** WHY do you walk through the fields in gloves,  
Missing so much and so much?  
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,  
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,  
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves  
And shivering-sweet to the touch?  
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,  
Missing so much and so much?

## SIEGFRIED SASSOON

1886-

242

### *When I'm alone*

'**W**HEN I'm alone'—the words tripped off his tongue  
As though to be alone were nothing strange.  
'*When I was young,*' he said; '*when I was young. . .*'

I thought of age, and loneliness, and change.  
I thought how strange we grow when we're alone,  
And how unlike the selves that meet, and talk,  
And blow the candles out, and say good-night.  
*Alone . . .* The word is life endured and known.  
It is the stillness where our spirits walk  
And all but inmost faith is overthrown.

243

### *Grandeur of Ghosts*

**W**HEN I have heard small talk about great men  
I climb to bed; light my two candles; then  
Consider what was said; and put aside  
What Such-a-one remarked and Someone-else replied.

They have spoken lightly of my deathless friends,  
(Lamps for my gloom, hands guiding where I stumble,)  
Quoting, for shallow conversational ends,  
What Shelley shrilled, what Blake once wildly muttered.

How can they use such names and be not humble?  
I have sat silent; angry at what they uttered.  
The dead bequeathed them life; the dead have said  
What these can only memorize and mumble.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

244 *On Passing the New Menin Gate*

WHO will remember, passing through this Gate,  
The unheroic Dead who fed the guns?  
Who shall absolve the foulness of their fate,—  
Those doomed, conscripted, unvictorious ones?  
Crudely renewed, the Salient holds its own.  
Paid are its dim defenders by this pomp;  
Paid, with a pile of peace-complacent stone,  
The armies who endured that sullen swamp.

Here was the world's worst wound. And here with pride  
'Their name liveth for ever,' the Gateway claims.  
Was ever an immolation so belied  
As these intolerably nameless names?  
Well might the Dead who struggled in the slime  
Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.

245 *The Power and the Glory*

LET *there be life*, said God. And what **He** wrought  
Went past in myriad marching lives, and brought  
This hour, this quiet room, and my small thought  
Holding invisible vastness in its hands.

*Let there be God*, say I. And what I've done  
Goes onward like the splendour of the sun  
And rises up in rapture and is one  
With the white power of conscience that commands.

*Let life be God*. . . What wail of fiend or wraith  
Dare mock my glorious angel where he stands  
To fill my dark with fire, my heart with faith?

RUPERT BROOKE

1887-1915

246

*Clouds*

DOWN the blue night the unending columns press  
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,  
Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow  
Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.  
Some pause in their grave wandering comradeless,  
And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,  
As who would pray good for the world, but know  
Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain  
Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.  
I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,  
In wise majestic melancholy train,  
And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,  
And men, coming and going on the earth.

EDITH SITWELL

1887-

247

*From 'The Sleeping Beauty'*

To OSBERT

WHEN we come to that dark house,  
Never sound of wave shall rouse  
The bird that sings within the blood  
Of those who sleep in that deep wood,  
For in that house the shadows now  
Seem cast by some dark unknown bough.

## EDITH SITWELL.

The gardener plays his old bagpipe  
To make the melons' gold seeds ripe;  
The music swoons with a sad sound—  
'Keep, my lad, to the good safe ground!  
For once, long since, there was a felon  
With guineas gold as the seeds of a melon,  
And he would sail for a far strand  
To seek a waking, clearer land,—  
A land whose name is only heard  
In the strange singing of a bird.  
The sea was sharper than green grass,  
The sailors would not let him pass,  
For the sea was wroth and rose at him  
Like the turreted walls of Jerusalem,  
Or like the towers and gables seen  
Within a deep-boughed garden green.  
And the sailors bound and threw him down  
Among those wrathful towers to drown.  
And oh, far best,' the gardener said,  
'Like fruits to lie in your kind bed,—  
To sleep as snug as in the grave  
In your kind bed, and shun the wave,  
Nor ever sigh for a strange land  
And songs no heart can understand.'

I hunted with the country gentlemen  
Who, seeing Psyche fly, thought her a hen

And aimed at her; the mocking wingèd one  
Laughed at their wingless state, their crooked gun.

Then on the water—green and jewelled leaves  
Hiding ripe fruitage—every sportsman grieves,

## EDITH SITWELL

Sitting and grumbling in their flat boat edged  
With the soft feathers of the foam, scarce fledged.

But I will seek again the palace in the wood,  
Where never bird shall rouse our sleepy blood

Within the bear-dark forests, far beyond  
This hopeless hunting, or Time's sleepy bond.

The wicked fay descended, mopping, mowing  
In her wide-hooped petticoat, her water-flowing

Brightly-perfumed silks. . . . 'Ah, ha, I see  
You have remembered all the fays but me!'

(She whipped her panthers, golden as the shade  
Of afternoon in some deep forest glade.)

'I am very cross because I am old,  
And my tales are told,  
And my flames jewel-cold.

'I will make your bright birds scream,  
I will darken your jewelled dream,  
I will spoil your thickest cream.

'I will turn the cream sour,  
I will darken the bower,  
I will look through the darkest shadows and lour,—

'And sleep as dark as the shade of a tree  
Shall cover you. . . . Don't answer me!  
For if the Princess prick her finger  
Upon a spindle, then she shall be lost'

\* \* \* \*



EDITH SITWELL

DO, do,  
Princess, do,  
Like a tree that drips with gold you flow  
With beauty ripening very slow.  
Soon beneath that peaceful shade  
The whole world dreaming will be laid.  
Do, do,  
Princess, do,  
The years like soft winds come and go.  
Do, do,  
Princess, do,  
How river-thick flow your fleecèd locks  
Like the nymphs' music o'er the rocks. . . .  
From satyr-haunted caverns drip  
These lovely airs on brow and lip.  
Do, do,  
Princess, do,  
Like a tree that drips with gold you flow.

248      *The Hambone and the Heart*

(To PAVEL TCHELITCHEW)

*A Girl speaks:*

'**H**ERE in this great house in the barrack square,  
The plump and heart-shaped flames all stare  
Like silver empty hearts in wayside shrines.  
No flame warms ever, shines,  
Nor may I ever tire.

Outside, the dust of all the dead,  
Thick on the ground is spread  
Covering the tinsel flowers  
And pretty dove-quick hours,

## EDITH SITWELL

Among the round leaves, Cupid-small  
Upon the trees so wise and tall.  
O dust of all the dead, my heart has known  
That terrible Gehenna of the bone  
Deserted by the flesh,—with Death alone!

Could we foretell the worm within the heart,  
That holds the households and the parks of heaven,  
Could we foretell that land was only earth,  
Would it be worth the pain of death and birth,  
Would it be worth the soul from body riven?

For here, my sight, my sun, my sense,  
In my gown white as innocence,  
I walked with you. Ah, that my sun  
Loved my heart less than carrion.

Alas! I dreamed that the bare heart could feed  
One who with death's corruption loved to breed,—  
This Dead, who fell, that he might satisfy  
The hungry grave's blind need,—

That Venus stinking of the Worm!  
Deep in the grave, no passions storm:  
The worm's a pallid thing to kiss;  
She is the hungering grave that is

Not filled, that is not satisfied!  
Not all the sunken Dead that lies  
Corrupt there, chills her luxuries.

And fleet, and volatile her kiss,  
For all the grave's eternities!  
And soon another Dead shall slake  
Her passion, till that dust, too, break.

## EDITH SITWELL

Like little pigeons small dove-breasted flowers,  
Were cooing of far-off bird-footed showers,  
My coral neck was pink as any rose  
Or like the sweet pink honey-wax that grows,  
Or the fresh coral beams of clear moonlight,  
Where leaves like small doves flutter from our sight.

Beneath the twisted rose-boughs of the heat  
Our shadows walked like little foreigners,  
Like small unhappy children dressed in mourning,  
They listened by the serres-chaudes waterfalls  
But could not understand what we were saying,  
Nor could we understand their whispered warning,-  
There by the waterfalls we saw the Clown,  
As tall as Heaven's golden town,  
And in his hands, a Heart, and a Hambone  
Pursued by loving vermin; but deserted, lone,  
The Heart cried to my own:

### *The Heart speaks:*

Young girl, you dance and laugh to see,  
The thing that I have come to be.  
Oh, once this heart was like your own.  
Go, pray that yours may turn to stone.

This is the murdered heart of one  
Who bore and loved an only son.  
For him, I worked away mine eyes,  
My starved breast could not still his cries.

My little lamb, of milk bereft . . .  
My heart was all that I had left.  
Ah, could I give thee this for food,  
My lamb, thou knowest that I would.

## EDITH SITWELL

Yet lovely was the summer light  
Those days . . . I feel it through this night.  
Once Judas had a childish kiss,  
And still his mother knows but this.

He grew to manhood. Then one came,  
False-hearted as Hell's blackest shame  
To steal my child from me, and thrust  
The soul I loved down to the dust.

Her hungry wicked lips were red  
As that dark blood my son's hand shed;  
Her eyes were black as Hell's own night;  
Her ice-cold breast was winter-white.

I had put by a little gold  
To bury me when I was cold.  
That fangèd wanton kiss to buy,  
My son's love willed that I should die.

The gold was hid beneath my bed,—  
So little, and my weary head  
Was all the guard it had. They lie  
So quiet and still who soon must die.

He stole to kill me while I slept,  
The little son who never wept,  
But that I kissed his tears away  
So fast, his weeping seemed but play.

So light his footfall. Yet I heard  
Its echo in my heart and stirred  
From out my weary sleep to see  
My child's face bending over me.

## EDITH SITWELL

The wicked knife flashed serpent-wise,  
Yet I saw nothing but his eyes  
And heard one little word he said,  
Go echoing down among the Dead.

\* \* \* \*

They say the Dead may never dream.  
But yet I heard my pierced heart scream  
His name within the dark. They lie  
Who say the Dead can ever die.

For in the grave I may not sleep,  
For dreaming that I hear him weep.  
And in the dark, my dead hands grope  
In search of him. O barren hope!

I cannot draw his head to rest,  
Deep down upon my wounded breast;  
He gave the breast that fed him well  
To suckle the small worms of Hell.

The little wicked thoughts that fed  
Upon the weary helpless Dead,  
They whispered o'er my broken heart,—  
They struck their fangs deep in the smart.

'The child she bore with bloody sweat  
And agony has paid his debt.  
Through that bleak face the stark winds play,  
The crows have chased his soul away,—

'His body is a blackened rag  
Upon the tree,—a monstrous flag,'  
Thus one worm to the other saith,  
Those slow mean servitors of Death,

## EDITH SITWELL

They chuckling, said: 'Your soul grown blind  
With anguish, is the shrieking wind  
That blows the flame that never dies  
About his empty lidless eyes.'

I tore them from my heart, I said:  
'The life-blood that my son's hand shed—  
That from my broken heart outburst,  
I'd give again to quench his thirst.

'He did no sin. But cold blind earth  
The body was that gave him birth.  
All mine, all mine the sin. The love  
I bore him was not deep enough.'

\* \* \* \*

### *The Girl speaks:*

O crumbling heart, I too, I too have known  
The terrible Gehenna of the bone  
Deserted by the flesh. . . . I too have wept  
Through centuries like the deserted bone  
To all the dust of all the Dead to fill  
That place. . . . It would not be the dust I loved.

For underneath the lime-tree's golden town  
Of Heaven, where he stood, the tattered Clown  
Holding the screaming Heart and the Hambone,  
You saw the Clown's thick hambone, life-pink carrion,  
That Venus perfuming the summer air.  
Old pigs, starved dogs, and long worms of the grave  
Were rooting at it, nosing at it there.  
Then you, my sun, left me and ran to it  
Through pigs, dogs, grave-worms' ramparted tall waves.

\* \* \* \*

## EDITH SITWELL

I know that I must soon have the long pang  
Of grave-worms in the heart. . . . You are so changed,  
How shall I know you from the other long  
Anguishing grave-worms? I can but foretell  
The worm where once the kiss clung, and that last less chasm-  
deep farewell.

### 249      *The Lament of Edward Blastock*

For RICHARD ROWLEY

NOTE.—I took this story from the 'Newgate Calendar.' Edward Blastock suffered at Tyburn on the 26th of May, 1738. Being in the direst want, and seeing his sister and her children in an equal misery, he yielded to the solicitations of his sister's husband, and joined with him in becoming highwaymen. They went so far as to rob a gentleman of a few shillings. Then Edward Blastock, finding a warrant was out against him, took refuge in his sister's house.

She betrayed him to his death.

**T**HE pang of the long century of rains,  
Melting the last flesh from the bone,  
Cries to the heart: 'At least the bone remains,—  
If this alone.'

My bone cries to my mother's womb:  
Why were you not my tomb?  
Why was I born from the same womb as she  
Who sold my heart, my blood, who stole even my grave from  
me?

I crept to steal in the rich man's street  
That my sister's starving babes might eat—

(Death, you have known such rags as hold  
The starved man's heart together,—Death, you have known  
such cold!)

## EDITH SITWELL

I crept to hide in my sister's room,  
And dreamed it safe as my mother's womb:  
But there was a price upon the head  
Of one who stole that her babes might feed,  
So my sister said, 'I must go to buy  
Us bread with this pence . . .' And, for this, I die  
—Beyond my Death . . . with no grave to lie  
In, hide my heart deep down in that hole.  
For my sister went to sell her soul  
And my heart, and my life, and the love I gave . . .  
She went to rob me of my grave.  
And I would, I would the heart I gave  
Were dead and mouldering in that grave,  
I would my name were quite forgot,  
And my death dead beneath Death's rot.  
But I'd give the last rag of my flesh  
About my heart to the endless cold  
Could I know again the childish kiss  
My Judas gave of old—  
Oh, Christ that hung between two men like me,—  
Could I but know she was not this,—not this!

250

### *Colonel Fantock*

THUS spoke the lady underneath the trees:  
I was a member of a family  
Whose legend was of hunting—(all the rare  
And unattainable brightness of the air)—  
A race whose fabled skill in falconry  
Was used on the small song-birds and a winged  
And blinded Destiny. . . . I think that only  
Winged ones know the highest eyrie is so lonely.



## EDITH SITWELL

There in a land, austere and elegant,  
The castle seemed an arabesque in music;  
We moved in an hallucination born  
Of silence, which like music gave us lotus  
To eat, perfuming lips and our long eyelids  
As we trailed over the sad summer grass,  
Or sat beneath a smooth and mournful tree.

And Time passed, suavely, imperceptibly.

But Dagobert and Peregrine and I  
Were children then; we walked like shy gazelles  
Among the music of the thin flower-bells.  
And life still held some promise,—never ask  
Of what,—but life seemed less a stranger, then,  
Than ever after in this cold existence.  
I always was a little outside life,—  
And so the things we touch could comfort me;  
I loved the shy dreams we could hear and see—  
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,  
A little cold air wandering and lost.

All day within the straw-roofed arabesque  
Of the towered castle and the sleepy gardens wandered  
We; those delicate paladins the waves  
Told us fantastic legends that we pondered.

And the soft leaves were breasted like a dove,  
Crooning old mournful tales of untrue love.

When night came, sounding like the growth of trees,  
My great-grandmother bent to say good night,  
And the enchanted moonlight seemed transformed  
Into the silvery tinkling of an old  
And gentle music-box that played a tune

## EDITH SITWELL

Of Circean enchantments and far seas;  
Her voice was lulling like the splash of these.  
When she had given me her good-night kiss,  
There, in her lengthened shadow, I saw this  
Old military ghost with mayfly whiskers,—  
Poor harmless creature, blown by the cold wind,  
Boasting of unseen unreal victories  
To a harsh unbelieving world unkind,—  
For all the battles that this warrior fought  
Were with cold poverty and helpless age—  
His spoils were shelters from the winter's rage.  
And so for ever through his braggart voice,  
Through all that martial trumpet's sound, his soul  
Wept with a little sound so pitiful,  
Knowing that he is outside life for ever  
With no one that will warm or comfort him. . . .  
He is not even dead, but Death's buffoon  
On a bare stage, a shrunken pantaloon.  
His military banner never fell,  
Nor his account of victories, the stories  
Of old apocryphal misfortunes, glories  
Which comforted his heart in later life  
When he was the Napoleon of the schoolroom  
And all the victories he gained were over  
Little boys who would not learn to spell.

All day within the sweet and ancient gardens  
He had my childish self for audience—  
Whose body flat and strange, whose pale straight hair  
Made me appear as though I had been drowned—  
(We all have the remote air of a legend)—  
And Dagobert my brother whose large strength,

## EDITH SITWELL

Great body and grave beauty still reflect  
The Angevin dead kings from whom we spring;  
And sweet as the young tender winds that stir  
In thickets when the earliest flower-bells sing  
Upon the boughs, was his just character;  
And Peregrine the youngest with a naïve  
Shy grace like a faun's, whose slant eyes seemed  
The warm green light beneath eternal boughs.  
His hair was like the fronds of feathers, life  
In him was changing ever, springing fresh  
As the dark songs of birds . . . the furry warmth  
And purring sound of fires was in his voice  
Which never failed to warm and comfort me.

And there were haunted summers in Troy Park  
When all the stillness budded into leaves;  
We listened, like Ophelia drowned in blond  
And fluid hair, beneath stag-antlered trees;  
Then, in the ancient park the country-pleasant  
Shadows fell as brown as any pheasant,  
And Colonel Fantock seemed like one of these.  
Sometimes for comfort in the castle kitchen  
He drowsed, where with a sweet and velvet lip  
The snapdragons within the fire  
Of their red summer never tire.  
And Colonel Fantock liked our company;  
For us he wandered over each old lie,  
Changing the flowering hawthorn, full of bees,  
Into the silver helm of Hercules,  
For us defended Troy from the top stair  
Outside the nursery, when the calm full moon  
Was like the sound within the growth of trees.

## EDITH SITWELL

But then came one cruel day in deepest June,  
When pink flowers seemed a sweet Mozartian tune,  
And Colonel Fantock pondered o'er a book.  
A gay voice like a honeysuckle nook,—  
So sweet,—said, 'It is Colonel Fantock's age  
Which makes him babble.' . . . Blown by winter's rage  
The poor old man then knew his creeping fate,  
The darkening shadow that would take his sight  
And hearing; and he thought of his saved pence  
Which scarce would rent a grave . . . that youthful voice  
Was a dark bell which ever clanged "Too late"—  
A creeping shadow that would steal from him  
Even the little boys who would not spell,—  
His only prisoners. . . . On that June day  
Cold Death had taken his first citadel.

251

### *Ass-face*

ASS-FACE drank  
The asses' milk of the stars . . .  
The milky spirals as they sank  
From heaven's saloons and golden bars,  
Made a gown  
For Columbine,  
Spiriting down  
On sands divine  
By the asses' hide of the sea  
(With each tide braying free).  
And the beavers building Babel  
Beneath each tree's thin beard,  
Said, 'Is it Cain and Abel  
Fighting again we heard?'

EDITH SITWELL

It is Ass-face, Ass-face,  
Drunk on the milk of the stars,  
Who will spoil their houses of white lace—  
Expelled from the golden bars!

252      *From 'Gold Coast Customs'*

In Ashantee, a hundred years ago, the death of any rich or important person was followed by several days of national ceremonies, during which the utmost licence prevailed, and slaves and poor persons were killed that the bones of the deceased might be laved with human blood. These ceremonies were called Customs.

ONE fantee wave  
Is grave and tall  
As brave Ashantee's  
Thick mud wall.  
Munza rattles his bones in the dust,  
Lurking in murk because he must.  
Striped black and white  
Is the squealing light;  
The dust brays white in the market place,  
Dead powder spread on a black skull's face.  
Like monkey skin  
Is the sea—one sin  
Like a weasel is nailed to bleach on the rocks  
Where the eyeless mud screeched fawning, mocks  
At a negro that wipes  
His knife . . . dug there  
A bugbear bellowing  
Bone dared rear—  
A bugbear bone that bellows white  
As the ventriloquist sound of light,

\* \* \* \*

## EDITH SITWELL

It rears at his head-dress of felted black hair  
The one humanity clinging there—  
His eyeless face whitened like black and white bones  
And his beard of rusty  
Brown grass cones.

Hard blue and white  
Cowrie shells (the light  
Grown hard) outline  
The leopardskin musty  
Leaves that shine  
With an animal smell both thick and fusty.

One house like a ratskin  
Mask flaps fleet  
In the sailor's tall  
Ventriloquist street  
Where the rag houses flap—  
Hiding a gap.

Here, tier on tier,  
Like a black box rear  
In the flapping slum  
Beside Death's docks.  
I did not know this meaner Death  
Meant this: that the bunches of nerves still dance  
And caper among these slums, and prance.

\* \* \* \*

Can a planet tease  
With its great gold train,  
Walking beside the pompous main—  
That great gold planet the heat of the Sun  
Where we saw black Shadow, a black man, run,

## EDITH SITWELL

So a negress dare  
Wear long gold hair?  
The negress Dorothy one sees  
Beside the caverns and the trees  
Where her parasol  
Throws a shadow tall  
As a waterfall—  
The negress Dorothy still feels  
The great gold planet tease her brain.

And dreaming deep within her blood  
Lay Africa like the dark in the wood;  
For Africa is the unhistorical  
Unremembering, unrhetorical  
Undeveloped spirit involved  
In the conditions of nature—Man,  
That black image of stone hath delved  
On the threshold where history began.

Now under the cannibal  
Sun is spread  
The black rhinoceros-hide of the mud  
For endlessness and timelessness . . . dead  
Grass creaks like a carrion-bird's voice, rattles,  
Squeaks like a wooden shuttle. Battles  
Have worn this deserted skeleton black  
As empty chain armour . . . lazily back  
With only the half of its heart it lies,  
With the giggling mud devouring its eyes,  
Naught left to fight  
But the black clotted night  
In its heart, and ventriloquist squealing light.

\* \* \* \*

EDITH SITWELL

So Lady Bamburgher's Shrunk Head,  
Slum hovel, is full of the rat-eaten bones  
Of a fashionable god that lived not  
Ever, but still has bones to rot:  
A bloodless and an unborn thing  
That cannot wake, yet cannot sleep,  
That makes no sound, that cannot weep,  
That hears all, bears all, cannot move—  
It is buried so deep  
Like a shameful thing  
In that plague-spot heart, Death's last dust-heap.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

1888-

253

*Preludes*

(1)

THE winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.  
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.  
And now a gusty shower wraps  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves about your feet  
And newspapers from vacant lots;  
The showers beat  
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,  
And at the corner of the street  
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.  
And then the lighting of the lamps.



## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

### (ii)

The morning comes to consciousness  
Of faint stale smells of beer  
From the sawdust-trampled street  
With all its muddy feet that press  
To early coffee-stands.  
With the other masquerades  
That time resumes,  
One thinks of all the hands  
That are raising dingy shades  
In a thousand furnished rooms.

### (iii)

You tossed a blanket from the bed,  
You lay upon your back, and waited;  
You dozed, and watched the night revealing  
The thousand sordid images  
Of which your soul was constituted;  
They flickered against the ceiling.  
And when all the world came back  
And the light crept up between the shutters,  
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,  
You had such a vision of the street  
As the street hardly understands;  
Sitting along the bed's edge, where  
You curled the papers from your hair,  
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet  
In the palms of both soiled hands.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

(iv)

His soul stretched tight across the skies  
That fade behind a city block,  
Or trampled by insistent feet  
At four and five and six o'clock;  
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,  
And evening newspapers, and eyes  
Assured of certain certainties,  
The conscience of a blackened street  
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled  
Around these images, and cling:  
The notion of some infinitely gentle  
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;  
The worlds revolve like ancient women  
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

254

*The Hippopotamus*

*'And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also  
in the church of the Laodiceans.'*

THE broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Susceptible to nervous shock;  
While the True Church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.

## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

The hippo's feeble steps may err  
In compassing material ends,  
While the True Church need never stir  
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach  
The mango on the mango-tree;  
But fruits of pomegranate and peach  
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice  
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,  
But every week we hear rejoice  
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day  
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;  
God works in a mysterious way—  
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing  
Ascending from the damp savannas,  
And quiring angels round him sing  
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean  
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,  
Among the saints he shall be seen  
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,  
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,  
While the True Church remains below  
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

255

*Whispers of Immortality*

WEBSTER was much possessed by death  
And saw the skull beneath the skin;  
And breastless creatures under ground  
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls  
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!  
He knew that thought clings round dead limbs  
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another  
Who found no substitute for sense;  
To seize and clutch and penetrate,  
Expert beyond experience,

He knew the anguish of the marrow  
The ague of the skeleton;  
No contact possible to flesh  
Allayed the fever of the bone.

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye  
Is underlined for emphasis;  
Uncorseted, her friendly bust  
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar  
Compels the scampering marmoset  
With subtle effluence of cat;  
Grishkin has a maisonette;

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

The sleek Brazilian jaguar  
Does not in its arboreal gloom  
Distil so rank a feline smell  
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.

And even the Abstract Entities  
Circumambulate her charm;  
But our lot crawls between dry ribs  
To keep our metaphysics warm.

256

*Sweeney among the Nightingales*

(ὦμοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.)

**A**PENECK SWEENEY spreads his knees  
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,  
The zebra stripes along his jaw  
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon  
Slide westward toward the River Plate,  
Death and the Raven drift above  
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog  
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;  
The person in the Spanish cape  
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth  
Overturns a coffee-cup,  
Reorganized upon the floor  
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

The silent man in mocha brown  
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;  
The waiter brings in oranges  
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown  
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws  
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch  
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape  
Are suspect, thought to be in league;  
Therefore the man with heavy eyes  
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears  
Outside the window, leaning in,  
Branches of wistaria  
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct  
Converses at the door apart,  
The nightingales are singing near  
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood  
When Agamemnon cried aloud,  
And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

257

*The Hollow Men*

*(A Penny for the Old Guy)*

(i)

WE are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us—if at all—not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.

(ii)

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column

## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

### (iii)

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.



THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

(iv)

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

(v)

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

258

### *Journey of the Magi*

'A COLD coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.'  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.

## THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.  
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.  
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;  
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky,  
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.  
But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

259

*From 'The Rock'*

THE Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,  
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.  
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,  
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,  
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!  
The endless cycle of idea and action,  
Endless invention, endless experiment,  
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;  
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.  
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,  
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,  
But nearness to death no nearer to God.  
Where is the Life we have lost in living?  
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?  
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries  
Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.

THE naked earth is warm with spring,  
And with green grass and bursting trees  
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,  
And quivers in the sunny breeze;  
And life is colour and warmth and light,  
And a striving evermore for these;  
And he is dead who will not fight;  
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun  
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;  
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,  
And with the trees to newer birth;  
And find, when fighting shall be done,  
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven  
Hold him in their high comradeship,  
The Dog-Star, and the Sisters Seven,  
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,  
They stand to him each one a friend;  
They gently speak in the windy weather;  
They guide to valley and ridge's end.

The kestrel hovering by day,  
And the little owls that call by night,  
Bid him be swift and keen as they,  
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

## JULIAN GRENFELL

The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,  
If this be the last song you shall sing,  
Sing well, for you may not sing another;  
Brother, sing.'

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,  
Before the brazen frenzy starts,  
The horses show him nobler powers;  
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,  
And all things else are out of mind,  
And only joy of battle takes  
Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,  
Not caring much to know, that still  
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,  
And in the air death moans and sings;  
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,  
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

1889-

261

### *Epithalamium*

CAN the lover share his soul,  
Or the mistress show her mind;  
Can the body beauty share,  
Or lust satisfaction find?

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

Marriage is but keeping house,  
Sharing food and company,  
What has this to do with love  
Or the body's beauty?

If love means affection, I  
Love old trees, hats, coats and things,  
Anything that's been with me  
In my daily sufferings.

That is how one loves a wife—  
There's a human interest too,  
And a pity for the days  
We so soon live through.

What has this to do with love,  
The anguish and the sharp despair,  
The madness roving in the blood  
Because a girl or hill is fair?

I have stared upon a dawn  
And trembled like a man in love,  
A man in love I was, and I  
Could not speak and could not move.

262

### *Romance*

WHEN I was but thirteen or so  
I went into a golden land,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,  
They passed like fleeting dreams.  
I stood where Popocatepetl  
In the sunlight gleams.

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

I dimly heard the Master's voice  
And boys far-off at play,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream  
To and fro from school—  
Shining Popocatepetl  
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy  
And never a word I'd say,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Had taken my speech away:

I gazed entranced upon his face  
Fairer than any flower—  
O shining Popocatepetl  
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed  
Thin fading dreams by day,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
They had stolen my soul away!

263

### *A Love-song*

THE beautiful, delicate bright gazelle  
That bounds upon Night's hills  
Has not more lovely, silken limbs  
Than she who my heart fills.

But though this loveliness I lose  
When I shall lie with her,  
I do but pass that Image on  
For new eyes to discover.



WALTER JAMES TURNER

264

*The Dancer*

THE young girl dancing lifts her face  
Passive among the drooping flowers;  
The jazz band clatters sticks and bones  
In a bright rhythm through the hours.

The men in black conduct her round;  
With small sensations they are blind:  
Thus Saturn's Moons revolve embraced  
And through the cosmos wind.

But Saturn has not that strange look  
Unhappy, still, and far away,  
As though upon the face of Night  
Lay the bright wreck of day.

265

*In Time like Glass*

IN Time like glass the stars are set,  
And seeming-fluttering butterflies  
Are fixed fast in Time's glass net  
With mountains and with maids' bright eyes.

Above the cold Cordilleras hung  
The wingèd eagle and the Moon:  
The gold, snow-throated orchid sprung  
From gloom where peers the dark baboon:

The Himalayas' white, rapt brows;  
The jewel-eyed bear that threads their caves;  
The lush plains' lowing herds of cows;  
That Shadow entering human graves:

WALTER JAMES TURNER

All these like stars in Time are set,  
They vanish but can never pass;  
The Sun that with them fades is yet  
Fast-fixed as they in Time like glass.

266

*The Navigators*

I SAW the bodies of earth's men  
Like wharves thrust in the stream of time  
Whereon cramped navigators climb  
And free themselves in the warm sun:  
With outflung arms and shouts of joy  
Those spirits tramped their human planks;  
Then pressing close, reforming ranks,  
They pushed off in the stream again:  
Cold darkly rotting lay the wharves,  
Decaying in the stream of time;  
Slow winding silver tracks of slime  
Showed bright where came back none.

267

*Men fade like Rocks*

ROCK-LIKE the souls of men  
Fade, fade in time.  
Falls on worn surfaces,  
Slow chime on chime,  
Sense, like a murmuring dew,  
Soft sculpturing rain,  
Or the wind that blows hollowing  
In every lane.

WALTER JAMES TURNER

Smooth as the stones that lie  
Dimmed, water-worn,  
Worn of the night and day,  
In sense forlorn,  
Rock-like the souls of men  
Fade, fade in time;  
Smoother than river-rain  
Falls chime on chime.

268

*Tragic Love*

WHO shall invoke when we are gone  
The glory that we knew,  
Can we not carve To-Day in stone,  
In diamond this Dawn's dew?

The song that heart to heart has sung  
Write fadeless on the air;  
Expression in eyes briefly hung  
Fix in a planet's stare?

Alas, all beauty flies in *Time*  
And only as it goes  
Upon death's wind its fleeting chime  
Into sad memory blows.

Is this but presage of re-birth  
And of another Day  
When what within our hearts we said  
We once again shall say?

Oh, no! we never could repeat  
Those numbered looks we gave;  
But some pure lustre from their light  
All future worlds shall have.

WALTER JAMES TURNER

269

*Reflection*

**I**S it not strange that men can die  
Before their bodies do,  
And women's souls fade from their eyes?  
'Tis strange, but it is so.

Where have they gone and what were they,  
Those gleams of tenderer light  
Than falls from mere quick shining limbs  
And eyeballs merely bright?

Undying fires removing far  
Their unseen presence show,  
Leaving their brightness on dead moons  
As suns less heavenly do.

270 *From 'The Seven Days of the Sun'*

(i)

**I**HAD watched the ascension and decline of the Moon  
And did not realize that it moved only in my own mind.

Or that its distance of 240,000 miles  
Could also be .240,000 of an inch.

But now I know that the solar system and the constellations  
of stars

Are contained within me.

Nothing exists outside me. . . .

Death and Birth—

Strange and beautiful Appearances—

Like the Cypress and the Lily

Beside the amaranthine sea,

WALTER JAMES TURNER

Where the dark Orange Tree  
With its gold suns  
Hangs like a solar universe!

Myriads of fading faces

The flowering of the same meadow!

(ii)

That is the last time  
I shall call upon that Ancient Mariner,  
The God of my youth.

Seated among the stars  
I saw Him,  
With his hand on the tiller.

Is he not a Graven Image,  
A Stone Figure?

Are not the stars  
Frozen on his garment?

Is not the Universe  
The fixed Expression of his Face?

Henceforth I do not pretend  
To know God.

(iii)

If God kept a terrarium  
Our world religions  
Would be child's guides to the Zoo.

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

Our scientific textbooks  
Catalogues for collectors—  
'Many plates missing'!

But in what guide or textbook  
Shall *That* which looks out from the eye of the leopard be  
found?

If God were a Baptist  
He would keep an aquarium.

(iv)

What is the meaning of this Ideal  
That haunts my intelligence  
And charms my senses?

I cannot create her.  
Did Rosalind, Cleopatra and Miranda  
Satisfy Shakespeare?

Or the Dark Lady of the Sonnets?

Where did *she* come from?

Since they were all emanations of his own mind,  
Forms of his creative imagination,  
Why did *she* affect him as flesh and blood?

Yet no doubt he was aware of the flesh of Rosalind:  
It was cooler and more white.  
And Cleopatra!  
He was aware of her warm blood.

Yet 'The Dark Lady' was a different sensation  
She was what is called 'real.'

WALTER JAMES TURNER

I have met 'The Dark Lady'  
And I assure you she is no more real than Rosalind.

But we get intangled in a confusion of sensations.  
When past present and future are mixed in a certain way  
The intelligence is bewildered;  
And being unanalysed the effect is given a meaningless name—  
*Reality*.

Reality is bewilderment. . . .

Only in a state of 'complete confusion' can I beget a daughter.  
Not from Rosalind, Cleopatra and Miranda  
But from 'The Dark Lady.'

Evidently there is a difference in these phantoms!

But a daughter is merely the continuation of my bewilder-  
ment,  
Another 'Dark Lady.'

Are there different kinds of 'complete confusion'?  
Is every 'Dark Lady' the same?

Let me tell of The Dark Lady  
With whom I lay down in a corner of my brain!

(v)

Dian, Isis, Artemis, whate'er thy name  
Thou ghost, thou principle, can thy white stags  
Move and beget themselves, eclipse a tree?  
Are they not white, the Moon's transparent rags,  
Mere insubstantial light! But O how bright,  
How milk-opaque, how concrete to the sight—  
Chaste negatives, washwhites of chastity!

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

(vi)

Spirits walking everywhere,  
Thrown up like fountains  
Then sinking into the ground,  
Walking among the trees  
That seem fast  
So slowly do they well up  
And sink down.

But to me the landscape is like a sea  
the waves of the hills  
and the bubbles of bush and flower  
and the springtide breaking into white foam !

It is a slow sea,  
*Mare tranquillum*,  
And a thousand years of wind  
Cannot raise a dwarf billow to the moonlight.  
But the bosom of the landscape lifts and falls  
With its own leaden tide,  
That tide whose sparkles are the lilliputian stars.  
It is that slow sea  
That sea of adamantyne languor,  
Sleep !

(vii)

I have seen mannequins,  
As white and gold as lilies,  
Swaying their tall bodies across the burnished floor  
Of *Reville* or *Paquin*;  
Writhing in colour and line,  
Curved tropical flowers  
As bright as thunderbolts.



## WALTER JAMES TURNER

Or hooded in dark furs  
The sun's pale splash  
In English autumn woods.

And I have watched these soft explosions of life  
As astronomers watch the combustion of stars.

The violence of supernatural power  
Upon their faces,  
White orbits  
Of incalculable forces.

And I have had no desire for their bodies  
But have felt the whiteness of a lily  
Upon my palate;  
And the solidity of their slender curves  
Like a beautiful mathematical proposition  
In my brain.

But in the expression of their faces  
Terror.

Cruelty in the eyes, nostrils and lips—

*Pain*

thou passion-flower, thou wreath, thou orbit,  
thou spiritual rotation,  
thou smile upon a pedestal  
*Peony* of the garden of paradise!

(viii)

What is this tempest  
This rumbling of drums!  
These yellow stripes of the tiger  
Through the dark green leaves!

WALTER JAMES TURNER

It is only the Sun  
Walking along the river bank.

Can you not hear the *pad pad* of the sunbeams  
Through the trees?

And the noiseless hurry of the water?

You would not think they were chained—  
Vibrating in the stillness of adamant!

(ix)

Beneath a thundery glaze  
The raindrops fall.

What is this new oppression of my heart?

Have I not looked upon this scene before!  
These leafy dromedaries  
Dark green,  
Painted upon that wall  
Of livid sky  
Where vacancy's bright silent spiders crawl!

The hills' pure outlined contours on that light  
Empty my soul.  
I watch those spidery lines  
Bright violet.

And there 's a poisonous cloud as dark as jet  
Pouring from heaven.

WALTER JAMES TURNER

271      *The Word made Flesh?*

**H**OW often does a man need to see a woman?  
Once!

Once is enough, but a second time will confirm if it be she,  
She who will be a fountain of everlasting mystery,  
Whose glance escaping hither and thither  
Returns to him who troubles her.

This happens rarely when a man is young;  
For the lusts of the young are full of universal gladness  
They have no sadness of disillusioning error  
But only earth's madness of thunder  
And its fading bright crackle of lightning.

But when a man is old, married, and in despair  
Has slept with the bodies of many women,  
And many women have attempted him vainly;

Then if he meet a woman whose loveliness  
Is young and yet troubled with power;  
Of the earth and yet not of the earth, homeless  
He will find her chained by distance.

No light travelling through space-time immeasurable  
Can leap so great a distance as their eyes;  
Naked together their spirits commingling  
Stir the seed in their genitals—  
Like a babe never to be born that leaps up crying.

The children of the flesh are sweet and fair  
But sweeter and fairer  
Are the children of no flesh but of the spirit,  
They are like an ever-living fever

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

Of the perishable blood  
Driving the dark brood of men and women  
Who because of these phantoms cannot come to rest in one  
another.

For the blood of a man when he is old,  
Old and full of power,  
Is no longer like the blood of a young man, inflammable,  
It is like a serpent and an eagle,  
A bull violent and immovable,  
And a burning that is without flame or substance.

Terrible is the agony of an old man  
The agony of incommunicable power  
Holding his potency like a rocket that is full of stars  
But his countenance is like a sky;

Or the tranquil countenance of the moon,  
The stars like jewels set in everlasting adamant  
Transparent as diamond:  
Drought, calm, serene, eternal!

His hairs crisp, like a Gorgon,  
They are the serpents of the spirit  
Curled like the hairs of a chaste body  
Emblem of a God who is not creative  
Who never from an Adam of dust  
Took that white bone, woman.

This the everlasting youth of an old man  
For whom there is no illusion.

This it is to be excluded from the bliss  
Of the men and women that He made in His image;  
But his are the children of the spirit,

WALTER JAMES TURNER

Sweeter and fairer are they than the children of the flesh  
But they are born solitary  
And agony is their making-kiss.

272            *Hymn to her Unknown*

**I**N despair at not being able to rival the creations of God  
I thought on her  
Whom I saw on the twenty-fourth of August nineteen thirty-  
four  
Having tea on the fifth story of Swan and Edgar's  
In Piccadilly Circus.

She sat facing me with an older woman and a younger  
And a little boy aged about five;  
I could see that she was his mother,  
Also she wore a wedding-ring and one set with diamonds.

She was about twenty-five years old,  
Slim, graceful, disciplined;  
She had none of the mannerisms of the suburbs,  
No affectations, a low clear speech, good manners,  
Hair thick and undyed

She knew that she was beautiful and exceedingly attractive,  
Every line of her dress showed it;  
She was cool and determined and laughed heartily,  
A wide mouth with magnificent teeth.

And having said this I come to the beginning of my despair,  
Despair that I in no way can describe her  
Or bring before the eyes of the present or the future  
This image that I saw.

## WALTER JAMES TURNER

Hundreds and hundreds of women do I see  
But rarely a woman on whom my eyes linger  
As the eyes of Venus lingered on Adonis.

What is the use of being a poet?  
Is it not a farce to call an artist a creator,  
Who can create nothing, not even re-present what his eyes  
have seen?

She never showed a sign that she saw me  
But I knew and she knew that I knew—  
Our eyes fleeting past, never meeting directly  
Like that vernal twinkling of butterflies  
To which Coleridge compared Shakespeare's *Venus and  
Adonis*.

And, like Venus, I lavished my love upon her  
I dallied with her hair, her delicate skin and smooth limbs,  
On her arms were heavy thick bangles  
Like the ropes of my heart's blood.

Could I express the ecstasy of my adoration?  
Mating with her were itself a separation!  
Only our bodies fusing in a flame of crystal  
Burning in an infinite empyrean  
Until all the blue of the limitless heaven were drunken  
In one globe of united perfection  
Like a bubble that is all the oceans of the world ascending  
To the fire that is the fire of fires, transcending  
The love of God, the love of God, the love of God—  
Ah! my pitiful efforts now ending  
I remember a bough of coral  
Flower of the transparent sea

WALTER JAMES TURNER

Delicate pink as though a ray of the sun descending  
Pathless into the ocean  
Printed the foot of Venus  
Where bloomed this asphodel.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

1889-

273

*Fire*

(*'Does not our life consist of the four elements?'—SHAKESPEARE.*)

THE great stone hearth has gone.  
An oblong electric tube is set in the wall  
Like a cheap jewel.  
Men converge no more to the fire,  
Men are one with the isolation:  
The pride of science stands, and the final desolation.

No smoke, no danger, you tell me with veneration:  
Much dies with the fire, young man,  
More than one generation:  
Man has known fire more than one generation.

Modern man! the mystical  
Core of life, and the carnal  
Are one with that you have slain,  
One with the fire, Cain!  
Truth, Passion, Pain,  
And regeneration eternal.

Life ends where life began:  
Adam delved and Eve span.

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Age-ago beside the hearth,  
Son of man, you lay at birth:  
When a cave-man carved a horn,  
By the cave fire you were born.

The Ionian conceives,  
His fraternity declare  
(Living with Shelley, plants and leaves,  
Their thoughts flowers of the atmosphere)  
Life is Water, Fire, and Air.

Empedocles he added Earth  
To the elements.

Life ends where life began,  
At the death or birth.  
'Is it son or daughter, man?'  
'Earth, Air, Fire and Water!'

Man, the earth shall grow the bread:  
In the dead behold the quick.  
In the quick behold the dead.

Thales counted Water,  
Aristotle tells,  
In the elements.  
Thales saw in wells and brine  
Some intelligence divine.

Water then for purge of blood,  
Man's first purge of flesh is so.  
(Put the pan upon the hob



## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Put the tub beside the fire,  
Bathe him so!)  
Belly-ache and sweat of blood  
Whether we will or no.

•  
Anaxágoras added Air  
To the elements.

But where is here the envoy  
Of the infinite Air?

(All Man's soul the Air conceives,  
All was Air till God began  
To mould the gladsome god, the Pan  
Who lives among the leaves.)

The Infinite fails you at your birth,  
Sorely fails you, man, on earth.  
He will fail in direst love,  
He'll betray with curse and scorn,  
Fame and Substance, Style and Place:  
The Infinite fails when you are born.

Fire will never fail you, Man,  
Whether you fever or tire.  
Adam butchered, but Eve span  
For the new life by the fire.

Heraclitus added Fire  
To the elements.

Man, at leaping of the wood-ash,  
Shaken with desire  
Take her, slim with silver flanks:  
Heraclitus added Fire.

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Woman, you will muse by wood-ash  
When your young man sleeps beside:  
Mother now of all creation,  
Guardian, you, of reincarnation,  
Who so lately was a bride.     •

Woman, by the whitening wood-ash  
Is it girl or son?  
Have you wedded flesh to spirit?  
Carnal in the incarnate  
In this new soul begun?

For the Greek he added  
Half ethereal Fire.

Butcher, baker, candlestick-maker,  
Blood, and bread, and taper,  
Meat, and wheat, and light,  
Along with Jones the draper  
The wife finds these in the little shops  
On the right of the undertaker.

Empedocles he added Earth  
To the elements.

Heat the meat then, bake the bread,  
Woman, as you desire.  
Fire's the fellow for board and bed,  
But light the candles at your prayers  
For him you lech with, or will wed:  
Heraclitus added Fire

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Make the fire up, he is cold.  
Dawns are cold in spring.  
Easter comes, but he is old  
At February-fill-dyke when the water  
Is blossoming everything,  
Here by fireside sits grand-daughter  
Sewing for the coming child.

‘Was it son or daughter, Midwife?’  
In the roof the rents  
Let the years in with the doctor,  
And another shouldering past,  
Death the tall one come at last!  
Entering with men’s memories,  
Entering with the elements,  
With the wind and water,  
With the sorrow and snow.  
‘Woman, was it son or daughter  
Eighty years ago?’

Fire was once his crony:  
Now his flame’s at fag-end,  
Now his fire’s at goal.  
Women, sheet him so!  
Set the tapers spick-and-spanly,  
Candles burn erect and manly  
For that whimpering brat the soul!

Doctor, Undertaker, Death,  
Mother, Gamp and Sire:  
What’s a man at moment’s birth?  
What’s a man at moment’s death?  
‘Earth, Air, Water, Fire!’

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Fire was fierce, dead man, in love,  
And in the dread conception.  
Fire was truth through passion known  
By sweat of blood, by rebel bone;  
Fire, sear the last deception!

Send him forth into the night  
Alone and unattended.  
Send him out alone to Fire,  
His rude dignity of man  
Untended and unfriended.

Run with torches, blaze the pyre,  
Far from town and street:  
Burn his body on the shore  
Where Earth, Air and Water meet,  
As all poets know,  
As all dead men know.

Death's the first and everlasting,  
Life the lean time and the fasting,  
Birth the end and everlasting,  
Whether we will or no.

274

### *Horses*

*(Newmarket or St. Leger)*

WHO, in the garden-pony carrying skeps  
Of grass or fallen leaves, his knees gone slack,  
Round belly, hollow back,  
Sees the Mongolian Tarpan of the Steppes?  
Or, in the Shire with plaits and feathered feet,  
The war-horse like the wind the Tartar knew?  
Or, in the Suffolk Punch, spells out anew  
The wild grey asses fleet

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

With stripe from head to tail, and moderate ears?  
In cross sea-donkeys, sheltering as storm gathers,  
The mountain zebras maned upon the withers,  
With round enormous ears?

And who in thoroughbreds in stable garb  
Of blazoned rug, ranged orderly, will mark  
The wistful eyelashes so long and dark,  
And call to mind the old blood of the Barb?  
And that slim island on whose bare campaigns  
Galloped with flying manes,  
For a king's pleasure, churning surf and scud,  
A white Arabian stud?

That stallion, teaser to Hobgoblin, free  
And foaled upon a plain of Barbary:  
Godolphin Barb, who dragged a cart for hire  
In Paris, but became a famous sire,  
Covering all lovely mares; and she who threw  
Rataplan to the Baron, loveliest shrew;  
King Charles's royal mares; the Dodsworth Dam;  
And the descendants: Yellow Turk, King Tom;  
And Lath out of Roxana, famous foal;  
Careless; Eclipse, unbeaten in the race,  
With white blaze on his face;  
Prunella who was dam to Parasol.

Blood Arab, pony, pedigree, no name,  
All horses are the same:  
The Shetland stallion stunted by the damp,  
Yet filled with self-importance, stout and small;  
The Cleveland slow and tall;  
New Forests that may ramp

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Their lives out, being branded, breeding free  
When bluebells turn the Forest to a sea,  
When mares with foal at foot flee down the glades,  
Sheltering in bramble coverts  
From mobs of corn-fed lovers;  
Or, at the acorn harvest, in stockades  
A round-up being afoot, will stand at bay,  
Or, making for the heather clearings, splay  
Wide-spread towards the bogs by gorse and whin,  
Roped as they flounder in  
By foresters.

But hunters as day fails  
Will take the short-cut home across the fields;  
With slackened rein will stoop through darkening wealds;  
With creaking leathers skirt the swedes and kales;  
Patient, adventuring still,  
A horse's ears bob on the distant hill;  
He starts to hear  
A pheasant chuck or whirr, having the fear  
In him of ages filled with war and raid,  
Night gallop, ambushade;  
Remembering adventures of his kin  
With giant winged worms that coiled round mountain bases,  
And Nordic tales of young gods riding races  
Up courses of the rainbow; here, within  
The depth of Hampshire hedges, does he dream  
How Athens woke, to hear above her roofs  
The welkin flash and thunder to the hoofs  
Of Dawn's tremendous team?

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

275

*Asian Desert*

HERE the hills are earth's bones,  
Jutting up out of her,  
Here she died long since,  
Here fell to decay,  
Demolished by storm and rain,  
Her skeleton hardened to stones  
That grow not the flesh again.

There is her spine, dark, rack-a-bones,  
Iron-stone ranges her limbs  
Zigzagging the sky,  
Cleansed and eased is her sex,  
Pure, bitter, and rank  
The hollow, the dearth of her flank,  
Here lies the mother of men.

Here she gave birth, brought forth,  
Stretched awry in an acid dawn,  
Came here, crowding, trampling, *hating*,  
Came forth her spawn.

Her spawn have abandoned her.  
Here is left nothing,  
Nothing but bone.

I am in love with her.  
No appurtenances are hers;  
No trappings are hers, only stone,  
Fossil stone she has grown;  
No flesh tint is here. The winds blow  
Always from Asia, retrieved her flesh  
Of ecstasy, long ago.

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Here is she old, old.  
Here is her structure, her core;  
Here the slate, and the surface scree is washed down  
Into platforms of shale;  
Here she died with her heart bled brown:  
No blood coursed from her more.

Here she has no heart,  
Lies not as the earth in the other lands  
With her limbs apart.

Here strongly the sap is outwrung,  
Here the memory divine  
Of an old woman is mine,  
So old she was never young.

Ah, but see, is she not beautiful?  
Hank of stone, wrinkle of rock,  
Pared, seared, stark with age?  
Is she not tenderer far than when she allures  
Man on his pilgrimage?

276

### *Fishing*

I WILL go with the first air of morning  
To the land of Palestine.

Once, far from oasis,  
Where dates grow costly and fine,  
Men gathered the shining shoals,  
That rippled up the road to the moon,  
The road of the moonshine.

Lovely the mercury, the flutter of the sea,  
And the squares of the quicksilver nets,  
And the drops of the sea divine,



## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

As the fishes took the road to death;  
Little waifs, little souls,  
Lovely in their living and dying ever,  
For luminous are their fins as feathers in the sun,  
Sunny their scales as the sheen of the jay,  
—When, silly tomboy, in sunshine he screams—  
For inwardly lit are they;  
Inwardly lit of their own light it seems,  
Knowing a clarity ungiven to the day,  
As on the branching reefs undersea they alight and sway  
To the swell like swarming starlings in a windy tree.  
Yet intimate with shadows that in air cannot be,  
Dark are they, brooding, knowing, yet gay,  
Shaft of sunlight theirs, deeps the lark never knows,  
No, nor even the nightingale crucified  
On the spine of the rose!

Beautiful their world, having no purpose, being for ever un-  
seen.

None know that beauty for beauty's sake made,  
Alone, content in the depth for ever it dwells;  
Unstable as beech-leaves in May that eternal green,  
The shifting, tremulous purple and brown of the rock-shade,  
The frail light on the shallows,  
And the young travelling shells  
Like angels gently moving their wings  
Over the dappled wells,  
Rising and dipping as they swim in the sunlight;  
And the waving, wooing anemones like hedgerow mallows,  
And the Horned Iridescent whose life and death is a sleep.

Let me learn the wonder  
Of those then who dwelt in the deep,

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

When Jesus went fishing.  
When they by Jesus were lifted from the sea;  
From the fast-flowing moonlight with His hands hauled He,  
Singing a sailor's tune;  
A tune men forgot, having short memory,  
Or tired of knowing too well all the handcraft songs:  
Potter's plaint or huckster's croon.

But a lilt that He knew  
When making cork floats at Madonna's knee,  
And singing now where sagged the barque side,  
Tumbling black oval in the spate of the moon;  
With Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the little John behind Him,  
While gaped the rest of the crew;  
While broke in hissing bubbles the eternal road of fire,  
So the eyes were dazzled looking overside,  
From His fingers fled the phosphorus away,  
To the road no man may pursue.

For up that road went the feet of the Messiah,  
Out of the horizon walked He,  
Slim between the fishing smacks glancing not aside,  
Gentle in His going, borne slightly on the tide,  
Preaching gravely as He went to the groups of gaping fishes,  
In the waters of Galilee.

277

### *From 'Lenin'*

SO I came down the steps to Lenin.  
With a herd of peasants before  
And behind me, I saw  
A room stained scarlet, and there  
A small wax man in a small glass case.

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Two sentinels at his feet, and one at his head,  
Two little hands on his breast:  
Pious spinster asleep; and I said  
'Many warrants these delicate hands have signed.'  
A lamp shone, red,  
An aureole over him, on his red hair;  
His uniform clothed him still.

Greedy of detail I saw,  
In those two minutes allowed,  
The man was not wax, as they said,  
But a corpse, for a thumb nail was black,  
The thing was Lenin.

Then a woman beside me cried  
With a strange voice, foreign, loud.  
And I, who fear not life nor death, and those who have died  
Only a little, was inwardly shaken with fear,  
For I stood in the presence of God;  
The voice I heard was the voice of all generations  
Acclaiming new faiths, horrible, beautiful faiths;  
I knew that the woman wailed as women wailed long ago  
For Christ in the sepulchre laid.  
Christ was a wax man too,  
When they carried Him down to the grave.

278

### *From 'Matrix'*

THE spiritual, the carnal, are one.  
For when love is greatly found,  
It outcries, as men cry  
When in pain to be laid on the ground;  
As men in pain moan for the grave;

## DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Hear: how in love the lips moan,  
For Man must pursue  
Love the lamp back to darkness again;  
Is not this death too?

\* \* \* \*

Earth, back to the earth.

Out of her beauty at birth,  
Out of her I came  
To lose all that I knew:  
Though somehow at birth I died,  
One night she will teach me anew:  
Peace? The same,  
As a woman's, a mother's  
Breast undenied, to console  
The small bones built in the womb,  
The womb that loathed the bones,  
And cast out the soul.

279

### *The Buried Child*

*(Epilogue to 'Deserted House')*

HE is not dead nor liveth  
The little child in the grave,  
And men have known for ever  
That he walketh again;  
They hear him November evenings,  
When acorns fall with the rain.

Deep in the hearts of men  
Within his tomb he lieth,  
And when the heart is desolate  
He desolate sigheth.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Teach me then the heart of the dead child,  
Who, holding a tulip, goeth  
Up the stairs in his little grave-shift,  
Sitting down in his little chair  
By his biscuit and orange,  
In the nursery he knoweth.

Teach me all that the child who knew life  
And the quiet of death,  
To the croon of the cradle-song  
By his brother's crib  
In the deeps of the nursery dusk  
To his mother saith.

280

*The Morning after*

BARABBAS, Judas Iscariot,  
The night after He died,  
The night after He cried  
'They know not what they do,'  
What did you do?  
You two.

Chaste, and sober from prison,  
You went to a tavern, Barabbas,  
You drank the night through,  
You shared thirty pieces of silver,  
Judas Iscariot and you.

Barabbas disorderly,  
Bawdy Barabbas,  
Drank, stole, and swore;  
Next day was back in the prison!  
By word of a whore.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

Judas Iscariot, sun half arisen,  
Went out in the gloom.  
Beautiful Judas Tree,  
April in bloom.

HUGH M'DIARMID

1892-

281

*Parley of Beasts*

AULD Noah was at hame wi' them a',  
The lion and the lamb,  
Pair by pair they entered the Ark  
And he took them as they cam'.

If twa a' ilka beist there is  
Into this room s'ud come,  
Wad I could welcome them like him,  
And no' stand gowpin' dumb!

Be chief wi' them and they wi' me  
And a' wi' ane anither  
As Noah and his couples were  
There in the Ark thegither.

It's fain I'd mell wi' tiger and tit,  
Wi' elephant and eel,  
But noo-a'days e'en wi' ain's sel  
At hame it's hard to feel.

282     *O Wha's been here afore me, Lass*

O WHA'S been here afore me, lass,  
And hoo did he get in?  
—*A man that deed or I was born*  
*This evil thing has din.*

## HUGH M'DIARMID

And left as it were on a corpse  
Your maidenheid to me?  
—*Nae lass, gudeman, sin' Time began*  
*'S hed ony mair to gi'e.*

*But I can gi'e ye kindness, lad,*  
*And a pair o' willin' hands,*  
*And you sall ha'e my briests like stars,*  
*My limbs like willow wands;*

*And on my lips ye'll heed nae mair,*  
*And in my hair forget,*  
*The seed o' a' the men that in*  
*My virgin womb ha'e met.*

283

### *Cattle Show*

I SHALL go among red faces and virile voices,  
See stylish sheep, with fine heads and well-wooled,  
And great bulls mellow to the touch,  
Brood mares of marvellous approach, and geldings  
With sharp and flinty bones and silken hair.

And through th' enclosure draped in red and gold  
I shall pass on to spheres more vivid yet  
Where countesses' coque feathers gleam and glow  
And, swathed in silks, the painted ladies are  
Whose laughter plays like summer lightning there.

284

### *The Skeleton of the Future*

*(At Lenin's Tomb)*

RED granite and black diorite, with the blue  
Of the labradorite crystals gleaming like precious stones  
In the light reflected from the snow; and behind them  
The eternal lightning of Lenin's bones.

285

*English Girl*

I THAT lived ever about you  
Never touched you, Lilian;  
You came from far away  
And devils with twitching faces  
Had all their will of you  
For gold.  
But I saw your little feet in your bedroom,  
Your little heathen shoes I kept so bright.  
For they regarded not your feet, Lilian,  
But I regarded.  
Your little heathen stockings were mine to carry  
And to set out and to wash.  
They regarded not your feet,  
But I that lived ever about you  
Never touched you, Lilian.  
Their faces twitch more this frosty morning;  
They have put you in a heathen box  
And hidden your feet and carried you out in the frosty morning.  
They have passed with you over the foggy brook  
And look like big blue men in the mist on the other side.  
Now only the mist and the water remain.  
They never regarded your feet,  
But I regarded, Lilian.  
Their faces ever twitched,  
But for the seven years since I saw you  
My face did not change.  
They never regarded your warm feet,  
But I regarded.

*(From the Chinese 19th century).*



VIVIAN DE SOLA PINTO

286

*At Piccadilly Circus*

1895-

I WANDER through a crowd of women,  
Whose hair and teeth are false,  
Whose lips and cheeks have artificial colours,  
Whose dress is artificial silk and velvet,  
Whose talk is mainly lies.

And I remember  
How once I dreamed of Truth:  
It was a fair green tree,  
Growing in an open grassy place  
Beside cool flowing water . . .

They have cut down the tree.  
Its sap is dried up long ago.  
Perhaps some fragment of it still remains  
Embedded in an ugly garish building.

But most of it is turn'd to poisonous dust,  
Blown through the stifling streets of slums.

VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

287

*The Greater Cats*

1892-

THE greater cats with golden eyes  
Stare out between the bars.  
Deserts are there, and different skies,  
And night with different stars.  
They prowl the aromatic hill,  
And mate as fiercely as they kill,

## VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

And hold the freedom of their will  
To roam, to live, to drink their fill;  
But this beyond their wit know I:  
Man loves a little, and for long shall die.

Their kind across the desert range  
Where tulips spring from stones,  
Not knowing they will suffer change  
Or vultures pick their bones.  
Their strength's eternal in their sight,  
They rule the terror of the night,  
They overtake the deer in flight,  
And in their arrogance they smite;  
But I am sage, if they are strong:  
Man's love is transient as his death is long.

Yet oh what powers to deceive!  
My wit is turned to faith,  
And at this moment I believe  
In love, and scout at death.  
I came from nowhere, and shall be  
Strong, steadfast, swift, eternally:  
I am a lion, a stone, a tree,  
And as the Polar star in me  
Is fixed my constant heart on thee.  
Ah, may I stay forever blind  
With lions, tigers, leopards, and their kind.

288

### *On the Lake*

A CANDLE lit in darkness of black waters,  
A candle set in the drifting prow of a boat,  
And every tree to itself a separate shape,  
Now plummy, now an arch; tossed trees

## VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

Still and dishevelled; dishevelled with past growth,  
Forgotten storms; left tufted, tortured, sky-rent,  
Even now in stillness; stillness on the lake,  
Black, reflections pooled, black mirror  
Pooling a litten candle, taper of fire;  
Pooling the sky, double transparency  
Of sky in water, double elements,  
Lying like lovers, light above, below;  
Taking, from one another, light; a gleaming,  
A glow reflected, fathoms deep, leagues high,  
Two distances meeting at a film of surface  
Thin as a membrane, sheet of surface, fine  
Smooth steel; two separates, height and depth,  
Able to touch, giving to one another  
All their profundity, all their accidents,  
—Changeable mood of clouds, permanent stars,—  
Like thoughts in the mind hanging a long way off,  
Revealed between lovers, friends. Peer in the water  
Over the boat's edge; seek the sky's night-heart;  
Are they near, are they far, those clouds, those stars  
Given, reflected, pooled? are they so close  
For a hand to clasp, to lift them, feel their shape,  
Explore their reality, take a rough possession?  
Oh no! too delicate, too shy for handling,  
They tilt at a touch, quiver to other shapes,  
Dance away, change, are lost, drowned, scared;  
Hands break the mirror, speech's crudity  
The surmise, the divining;  
Such things so deeply held, so lightly held,  
Subtile, imponderable, as stars in water  
Or thoughts in another's thoughts.  
Are they near, are they far, those stars, that knowledge?

VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

Deep? shallow? solid? rare? The boat drifts on,  
And the litten candle single in the prow,  
The small, immediate candle in the prow,  
Burns brighter in the water than any star.

EDWARD SHANKS

1892-

289

*Sleeping Heroes*

OLD Barbarossa  
Sleeps not alone  
With his beard flowing over  
The gray mossy stone.

Arthur is with him  
And Charlemain. The three  
Wait for awaking,  
Wait to be free.

When the raven calls them  
They'll rise all together  
And gird their three swords on  
And look at the weather.

Arthur will swear it is  
A very cold morning:  
Charlemain says a red sunrise  
Is the shepherd's warning.

Barbarossa says nothing  
But feels in every bone  
A pang of rheumatism  
From sleeping on wet stone.

EDWARD SHANKS

Then from the gray heaven  
Comes a mist of faint rain  
And the three sleeping heroes  
Turn to sleep again.

290 *Drilling in Russell Square*

THE withered leaves that drift in Russell Square  
Will turn to mud and dust and moulder there  
And we shall moulder in the plains of France  
Before these leaves have ceased from their last dance.

The hot sun triumphs through the fading trees,  
The fading houses keep away the breeze  
And the autumnal warmth strange dreams doth breed  
As right and left the faltering columns lead.  
*Squad, 'shun! Form fours. . .* And once the France we knew  
Was a warm distant place with sun shot through,  
A happy land of gracious palaces,  
And Paris! Paris! Where twice green the trees  
Do twice salute the all delightful year!  
(Though the sun lives, the trees are dying here.)  
And Germany we thought a singing place,  
Where in the hamlets dwelt a simple race,  
Where th' untaught villager would still compose  
Delicious things upon a girl or rose.  
Well, I suppose all I shall see of France  
Will be most clouded by an Uhlan's lance,  
Red fields from cover glimpsed be all I see  
Of innocent, singing, peasant Germany.

*Form four-rs! Form two deep! We wheel and pair*  
And still the brown leaves drift in Russell Square.

EDWARD SHANKS

291

*Going in to Dinner*

**B**EAT the knife on the plate and the fork on the can,  
For we're going in to dinner, so make all the noise you  
can,

Up and down the officer wanders, looking blue,  
Sing a song to cheer him up, he wants his dinner too.

March into the village-school, make the tables rattle  
Like a dozen dam' machine-guns in the bloody battle,  
Use your forks for drumsticks, use your plates for drums,  
Make a most infernal clatter, here the dinner comes!

292

*'High Germany'*

**N**O more the English girls may go  
To follow with the drum,  
But still they flock together  
To see the soldiers come;  
For horse and foot are marching by  
And the bold artillery:  
'They're going to the cruel wars  
In Low Germany.

'They're marching down by lane and town  
And they are hot and dry,  
But as they marched together  
I heard the soldiers cry:  
'O all of us, both horse and foot  
And the proud artillery,  
We're going to the merry wars  
In Low Germany.'

RICHARD CHURCH

293

*On Hearing the First Cuckoo*

1893-

O H Menelaus,  
Oh my poor friend,  
You have heard the news?  
I know! I know! They all betray us.  
Sooner or later there comes an end  
To kindness; and the winds of abuse  
Nip the bud, shrivel the bloom.  
Then marriage, with the promise of the bed,  
Is a disgusting memory of betrayal,  
Shame in the heart for words once said  
With a bride now clasped to another groom.  
Not the flesh, but the mind, Menelaus, is frail.

THOMAS M<sup>c</sup>GREEVY

294

*A'ndh Ruadh O Domhnaill*

1893-

*To STIEFÁN MACENNA*

JUAN *de Juni* the priest said,  
Each J becoming H;

*Berruguete*, he said,  
And the G was aspirate;

*Ximenez*, he said then  
And aspirated first and last.

But he never said  
And—it seemed odd—he

THOMAS M<sup>c</sup>GREEVY

Never had heard  
The aspirated name  
Of the centuries-dead  
Bright-haired young man  
Whose grave I sought.

All day I passed  
In greatly built gloom  
From dusty gilt tomb  
Marvellously wrought  
To tomb  
Rubbing  
At mouldy inscriptions  
With fingers wetted with spit  
And asking  
Where I might find it  
And failing.  
Yet when  
Unhurried—

Not as at home  
Where heroes, hanged, are buried  
With non-commissioned officers' bored maledictions  
Quickly in the gaol-yard—

They brought  
His blackening body  
Here  
To rest  
Princes came  
Walking  
Behind it



## THOMAS M<sup>c</sup>GREEVY

And all Valladolid knew  
And out to Simancas all knew  
Where they buried Red Hugh.

### NOTE

#### *Aodh Ruadh O Domhnaill*

*Aodh Ruadh O Domhnaill, 'Red' Hugh O'Donnell, Prince of Tirconaill, went to Spain to consult with King Philip III after the defeat of the Irish and Spanish at Kinsale in 1601. He was lodged in the castle of Simancas during the negotiations but, poisoned by a certain James Blake, a Norman-Irish creature of the Queen of England (Elizabeth Tudor), he died there. As a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, he was buried in the church of San Francisco at Valladolid. This church was destroyed during the nineteenth century and none of the tombs that were in it seem to have been preserved.*

295

#### *Homage to Jack Yeats*

GREYER than the tide below, the tower;  
The day is grey above;  
About the walls  
A curlew flies, calls;  
Rain threatens, west;  
This hour,  
Driving,  
I thought how this land, so desolate,  
Long, long ago, was rich in living,  
More reckless, consciously, in strife,  
More conscious daring-delicate  
In love.

And then the tower veered  
Greyly to me,  
Passed . . .  
I meditated,

THOMAS M<sup>c</sup>GREEVY

Feared  
The thought experience sent,  
That the gold years  
Of Limerick life  
Might be but consecrated  
Lie,  
Heroic lives  
So often merely meant  
The brave stupidity of soldiers,  
The proud stupidity of soldiers' wives.

ROBERT NICHOLS

1893-

296 *To D'Annunzio: Lines from the Sea*

**L**OUNDENS the sea-wind, downward plunge the bows,  
Glass-green she takes it, staggers, rolls and checks,  
Then sheers, and as she buffets back the blows  
There comes a thundering along the decks.

The surf-smoke flies, the tatter'd cloud-wings haste,  
And the white sun, sheeted or glaring cold,  
Whirrs a harsh sword upon the spumy waste—  
Now ancient grey, now weltering dizzy gold.

This is the Adriatic; and I gaze  
In vain toward the north horizon's round,  
To where behind the threshes' driving haze,  
Beyond the glittering wilderness's bound,

There stands that man, target of Europe's eyes,  
Who in unholy honour her decree  
Defied; whom now the unbending Fates chastise  
With their most biting scourge: bare memory.

## ROBERT NICHOLS

D'Annunzio, upon the further shore  
Of this bleak Adriatic, while the brine  
Whitens the tunic which the shrapnel tore,  
From which you have ripped your valour's golden sign,

They say you wander, and the shrewd sun's glance  
Mocks you with starving warmth, the cruel cold  
Hail compasses you with its ironic dance—  
You, halt, bald, blind; you, shivering, beaten, old.

Thus do they say; and that you sometimes cast  
Hands that entreat towards the thunderous waves,  
As if to summon from the gorgeous past,  
And those black depths, such galleons and such braves

As throned your Venice, in republican state,  
Regent of every sun-filled sea that stirs  
Between the Sicilian's rosy sundown gate  
And the Cathayan's dawn-dark ridge of firs.

But vainly, quite in vain! the breaker's crest  
Shrieks as the wind stoops on the tortured seas  
To tear the brown weed from its cloven breast. . . .  
And suddenly you fall upon your knees,

When there is broken from your desolate heart  
So loud, so bitter, long and lost a cry  
That those who watch you secretly apart  
For sudden pity do not dare draw nigh.

They pity—but not I! Were pity priced  
So low, how spare true misery a tear?  
What though you bear the cross of Antichrist,  
It is in very truth a cross you bear;

## ROBERT NICHOLS

And we, to whom no certain faith is given  
With which in desperate act to gauge our worth,  
Or, having faith, are granted not of heaven  
Fierce hours to bear its crown or cross on earth,

We envy you. Whose is a happier lot  
Than his, who of all contraries aware  
Dares to believe, and when hell rages hot  
Is given an hour for that belief to dare?

He, who in face of contradiction's spite  
Has with his doubt so wrought he can aver  
That he believes, has to his soul a right;  
And he whom not a world's odds can deter

From making trial of belief so won  
Has known his soul; but he who best and last  
Fights till belief be lost or he undone  
Has given the world a soul, and holds his fast.

Therefore, D'Annunzio, gazing on your sea,  
I hail you, and I lift to heaven this prayer:  
*Mine be such faith, mine such a foe as he,  
That, when my hour strikes, I, as he, may dare!*

The Adriatic, a half-gale from the NE., January, 1921.

ROBERT NICHOLS

297

*From 'Sonnets to Aurelia'*

(i)

WHEN the proud World does most my world despise,  
Vaunting what most my human heart must grieve,  
Choosing what most I value to disprize,  
Deriding most that which I most believe—  
When the proud World, I say, does most offend  
The artless passion of my patient heart,  
Till I despair the morrow make amend,  
And before sunset from the sun would part:  
Then in my ruin's hour remembrance brings  
Faith to my doubt, to my intention grace,  
Reminding me how feebly fall such stings  
On one whose eyes dared once your eyes to face,  
And read in them, what no ill can remove,  
The love that to the lover said, '*I love*'.

298

(ii)

THOUGH to your life apparent stain attach,  
Yet to my eyes more fair shines its hid fame;  
Though tongues repeat what deceived eyes may catch,  
Yet to my ears your praise grows, not your blame;  
Though of yourself, yourself make ill report,  
The voice that speaks, so speaking, counters you;  
Though to your heart, your heart impute false sport,  
Yet by its height I know it calm and true.  
I grow love-wise that was but worldly-wise,  
My sight is healed by my own bitter tears,  
My truth more proved by these disprovèd lies,  
My faith more firm for these unfounded fears;  
For now I know you never shall deceive  
Till my belief your truth shall misbelieve.

ROBERT NICHOLS

299

(iii)

**B**UT piteous things we are—when I am gone,  
Dissolved in the detritus of the pits,  
And you, poor drivelling disregarded crone,  
Bide blinking at memory between drowsy fits,  
Within the mouldering ball-room of your brain,  
That once was filled fantastically bright  
With dancers eddying to a frantic strain,  
What ghosts will haunt the last hours of the light?

Among the mothlike shadows you will mark  
Two that most irk you, that with gesture human  
Yet play out passion heedless of the dark:  
A desperate man and a distracted woman,  
And you mayhap will vaguely puzzle, 'Who  
Is she? and he? why do they what they do?'

300

(iv)

**C**OME, let us sigh a requiem over love  
That we ourselves have slain in love's own bed,  
Whose hearts that had courage to drink enough  
Lacked courage to forbid the taste they bred,  
Which body captained soon, till, in disgust,  
These very hearts of bodily surfeit died,  
Poisoned by that sweet overflow of lust  
Whose past delight our substance deified.

No courage, no, nor pleasure have we now,  
To our own frantic bodies are we tossed,  
Only sometimes exhaustion will allow  
Us peace to observe the image of love's ghost,  
With torturing voice and with hid face return  
Faintly, as even now, to bid us mourn.

301

*Aurelia*

WHEN within my arms I hold you,  
Motionless in long surrender,  
Then what love-words can I summon,  
Tender as my heart is tender?

When within your arms you hold me,  
And kisses speak your love unspoken,  
Then my eyes with tears run over,  
And my very heart is broken.

302

*From 'The Flower of Flame'*

BEFORE I woke I knew her gone,  
Though nothing nigh had stirred;  
Now by the curtain inward blown  
She stood, not seen, but heard,  
Where the faint moonlight dimmed or shone . .  
And neither spoke a word.

One hand against her mouth she pressed,  
But could not stanch its cry;  
The other knocked upon her breast  
Impotently . . . while I  
Glared rigid, labouring, possessed,  
And dared not ask her why.

303 *The Moon behind high tranquil Leaves*

THE moon behind high tranquil leaves  
Hides her sad head;  
The dwindled water tinkles and grieves  
In the stream's black bed;

*And where now, where are you sleeping?*

ROBERT NICHOLS

The shadowy nightjar, hawking gnats,  
Flickers or floats;  
High in still air the flurrying bats  
Repeat their wee notes;

*And where now, where are you sleeping?*

Silent lightning flutters in heaven,  
Where quiet crowd  
By the toil of an upper whirlwind driven  
Dark legions of cloud;

*In whose arms now are you sleeping?*

The cloud makes, lidding the sky's wan hole,  
The world a tomb;  
Far out at sea long thunders roll  
From gloom to dim gloom;

*In whose arms now are you sleeping?*

Rent clouds, like boughs, in darkness hang  
Close overhead;  
The foreland's bell-buoy begins to clang'  
As if for the dead;

*Awake they where you are sleeping?*

The chasms crack; the heavens revolt;  
With tearing sound  
Bright bolt volleys on flaring bolt,  
Wave and cloud clash; through deep, through vault  
Huge thunders rebound!

*But they wake not where you are sleeping.*



ROBERT NICHOLS

304 *Don Juan's Address to the Sunset*

EXQUISITE stillness! What serenities  
Of earth and air! How bright atop the wall  
The stonecrop's fire, and beyond the precipice  
How huge, how hushed the primrose evenfall!  
How softly, too, the white crane voyages  
Yon honeyed height of warmth and silence, whence  
He can look down on islet, lake and shore  
And crowding woods and voiceless promontories,  
Or, further gazing, view the magnificence  
Of cloud-like mountains and of mountainous cloud  
Or ghostly wrack below the horizon rim  
Not even his eye has vantage to explore.  
Now, spirit, find out wings and mount to him,  
Wheel where he wheels, where he is soaring soar,  
Hang where now he hangs in the planisphere—  
Evening's first star and golden as a bee  
In the sun's hair—for happiness is here!

HERBERT READ

1893-

305 *The End of a War*

'In former days we used to look at life, and sometimes from a distance, at death, and still further removed from us, at eternity. To-day it is from afar that we look at life, death is near us, and perhaps nearer still is eternity.'—JEAN BOUVIER, a French subaltern, February 1916.

ARGUMENT

*In the early days of November 1918, the Allied Forces had for some days been advancing in pursuit of the retreating German Army. The advance was being carried out according to a schedule. Each Division was given a line to which it must*

## HERBERT READ

*attain before nightfall; and this meant that each battalion in a division had to reach a certain point by a certain time. The schedule was in general being well adhered to, but the opposition encountered varied considerably at different points.*

*On November 10th, a certain English Battalion had been continuously harassed by machine-gun fire, and late in the afternoon was still far from its objective. Advancing under cover, it reached the edge of a plantation from which stretched a wide open space of cultivated land, with a village in front about 500 yards away. The officer in charge of the scouts was sent ahead with a corporal and two men to reconnoitre, and this little party reached the outskirts of the village without observing any signs of occupation. At the entrance of the village, propped against a tree, they found a German officer, wounded severely in the thigh. He was quite conscious and looked up calmly as Lieut. S— approached him. He spoke English, and when questioned, intimated that the village had been evacuated by the Germans two hours ago.*

*Thereupon Lieut. S— signalled back to the battalion, who then advanced along the road in marching formation. It was nearly dusk when they reached the small place in front of the church, and there they were halted. Immediately from several points, but chiefly from the tower of the church, a number of machine-guns opened fire on the massed men. A wild cry went up, and the men fled in rage and terror to the shelter of the houses, leaving a hundred of their companions and five officers dead or dying on the pavement. In the houses and the church they routed out the ambushed Germans and mercilessly bayoneted them.*

*The corporal who had been with Lieut. S— ran to the entrance of the village, to settle with the wounded officer who had betrayed them. The German seemed to be expecting him; his face did not flinch as the bayonet descended.*

## HERBERT READ

*When the wounded had been attended to, and the dead gathered together, the remaining men retired to the school-house to rest for the night. The officers then went to the château of the village, and there in a gardener's cottage, searching for fuel, the corporal already mentioned found the naked body of a young girl. Both legs were severed, and one severed arm was found in another room. The body itself was covered with bayonet wounds. When the discovery was reported to Lieut. S.—, he went to verify the strange crime, but there was nothing to be done; he was, moreover, sick and tired. He found a bed in another cottage near the château, where some old peasants were still cowering behind a screen. He fell into a deep sleep, and did not wake until the next morning, the 11th of November, 1918.*

### I. MEDITATION OF THE DYING GERMAN OFFICER

**I**CH sterbe . . . Life ebbs with an easy flow  
and I've no anguish now. This failing light  
is the world's light: it dies like a lamp  
flickering for want of oil. When the last jump comes  
and the axe-head blackness slips through flesh  
that welcomes it with open but unquivering lips  
then I shall be one with the Unknown  
this Nothing which Heinrich made his argument  
for God's existence: a concept beyond the mind's reach.  
But why embody the Unknown: why give to God  
anything but essence, intangible, invisible, inert?  
The world is full of solid creatures—these  
are the mind's material, these we must mould  
into images, idols to worship and obey:  
the Father and the Flag, and the wide Empire  
of our creative hands. I have seen

## HERBERT READ

the heart of Europe send its beating blood  
like a blush over the world's pallid sphere  
calling it to one life, one order and one living.  
For that dream I've given my life and to the last  
fought its listless enemies. Now Chaos intervenes  
and I leave not gladly but with harsh disdain  
a world too strong in folly for the bliss of dreams.

I fought with gladness. When others cursed the day  
this stress was loosed  
and men were driven into camps, to follow  
with wonder, woe, or base delirium  
the voiceless yet incessant surge  
then I exulted: but with not more  
than a nostril's distension, an eager eye  
and fast untiring step.

The first week

I crossed the Fatherland, to take my place  
in the swift-winged swoop that all but ended  
the assay in one wild and agile venture.  
I was blooded then, but the wound  
seared in the burning circlet of my spirit  
served only to temper courage  
with scorn of action's outcome.  
Blooded but not beaten I left the ranks  
to be a leader. Four years  
I have lived in the ecstasy of battle.  
The throbbing of guns, growing yearly,  
has been drum music to my ears  
the crash of shells the thrill of cymbals  
bayonets fiddlers' bows and the crack of rifles  
plucked harp strings. Now the silence

## HERBERT READ

is unholy. Death has no deeper horror  
than diminishing sound—ears that strain  
for the melody of action, hear  
only the empty silence of retreating life.  
Darkness will be kinder.

I die—

But still I hear a distant gunfire, stirring in my ear  
like a weary humming nerve. I will cling to that sound  
and on its widening wave  
lapse into eternity. Heinrich, are you near?  
Best friend, but false to my faith.  
Would you die doubtfully with so calm a gaze?  
Mind above battles, does your heart resign  
love of the Fatherland in this hour of woe?  
No drum will beat in your dying ears, and your God  
will meet you with a cold embrace.  
The void is icy: your Abstraction  
freezes the blood at death: no calm  
bound in such a barren law. The bond between  
two human hearts is richer. Love can seal  
the anguished ventricles with subtle fire  
and make life end in peace, in love  
the love we shared in all this strife.  
Heinrich, your God has not this power, or he would heal  
the world's wounds and create the empire  
now left in the defeated hands of men.

At Valenciennes I saw you turn  
swiftly into an open church. I followed  
stood in the shadow of the aisle  
and watched you pray. My impulse then  
was to meet you in the porch and test

## HERBERT READ

my smile against your smile, my peace against yours  
and from your abashment pluck a wilder hope.  
But the impulse died in the act: your face was blank  
drained of sorrow as of joy, and I was dumb  
before renunciation's subtler calm.  
I let you pass, and into the world  
went to deny my sight, to seal my lips  
against the witness of your humble faith.  
For my faith was action: is action now!  
In death I triumph with a deed  
and prove my faith against your passive ghost.

Faith in self comes first, from self we build  
the web of friendship, from friends to confederates  
and so to the State. This web has a weft  
in the land we live in, a town, a hill  
all that the living eyes traverse. There are lights  
given by the tongue we speak, the songs we sing,  
the music and the magic of our Fatherland.  
This is a tangible trust. To make it secure  
against the tempests of inferior minds  
to build it in our blood, to make our lives  
a tribute to its beauty—there is no higher aim.  
This good achieved, then to God we turn  
for a crown on our perfection: God we create  
in the end of action, not in dreams.

God dies in this dying light. The mists receive  
my spent spirit: there is no one to hear  
my last wish. Already my thoughts  
rebound in a tenement whose doors  
are shut: strange muscles clench my jaws

## HERBERT READ

these limbs are numb. I cannot lift  
a finger to my will. But the mind  
rises like a crystal sphere above the rigid wreck  
is poised there, perhaps to fall into the void  
still dreaming of an Empire of the West.  
And so still feels no fear! Mind triumphs over flesh  
ordering the body's action in direst danger.  
Courage is not born in men, but born of love  
love of life and love of giving, love  
of this hour of death, which all love seeks.

I die, but death was destined. My life was given  
my death ordained when first my hand  
held naked weapons in this war. The rest  
has been a waiting for this final hour.  
In such a glory I could not always live.

My brow falls like a shutter of lead, clashes  
on the clenched jaw. The curtain of flesh  
is wreathed about these rigid lines  
in folds that have the easy notion of a smile.  
So let them kiss earth and acid corruption:  
extinction of the clod. The bubble is free  
to expand to the world's confines or to break  
against the pricking stars. The last lights shine  
across its perfect crystal: rare ethereal glimmer  
of mind's own intensity. Above the clod  
all things are clear, and what is left  
is petulant scorn, implanted passions,  
everything not tensely ideal. Blind emotions  
wreck the image with their blundering wings.  
Mind must define before the heart intrigues.

## HERBERT READ

Last light above the world, wavering in the darkest  
void of Nothing—how still and tenuous  
no music of the spheres—and so break with a sigh  
against the ultimate  
shores of this world  
so finite  
so small  
Nichts

### II. DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL OF THE MURDERED GIRL

#### *Body*

I speak not from my pallid lips  
but from these wounds.

#### *Soul*

Red lips that cannot tell  
a credible tale.

#### *Body*

In a world of martyred men  
these lips renounce their ravage:  
The wounds of France  
roused their fresh and fluid voices.

#### *Soul*

War has victims beyond the bands  
bonded to slaughter. War moves with armoured wheels  
across the quivering flesh and patient limbs  
of all life's labile fronds.



## HERBERT READ

### *Body*

France was the garden I lived in.  
Amid these trees, these fields, petals fell  
flesh to flesh; I was a wilder flower.

### *Soul*

Open and innocent. So is the heart  
laid virgin to my voice. I filled  
your vacant ventricles with dreams  
with immortal hopes and aspirations that exalt  
the flesh to passion, to love and hate.  
Child-radiance then is clouded, the light  
that floods the mind is hot with blood  
pulse beats to the vibrant battle-cry  
the limbs are burnt with action.

### *Body*

This heart had not lost its innocence so soon  
but for the coming of that day when men  
speaking a strange tongue, wearing strange clothes  
armed, flashing with harness and spurs  
carrying rifles, lances or spears  
followed by rumbling waggons, shrouded guns  
passed through the village in endless procession  
swift, grim, scornful, exulting.

### *Soul*

You had not lost your innocence so soon  
but for the going of men from the village  
your father gone, your brother  
only the old left, and the very young  
the women sad, the houses shuttered

## HERBERT READ

suspense of school, even of play  
the eager search for news, the air  
of universal doubt, and then the knowledge  
that the wavering line of battle now was fixed  
beyond this home. The soil was tilled  
for visionary hate.

### *Body*

Four years was time enough  
for such a seedling hate to grow  
sullen, close, intent;  
To wait and wonder  
but to abate  
no fervour in the slow passage of despair.

### *Soul*

The mind grew tense.

### *Body*

My wild flesh was caught  
in the cog and gear of hate.

### *Soul*

I lay coiled, the spring  
of all your intricate design.

### *Body*

You served me well. But still I swear  
Christ was my only King.

### *Soul*

France was your Motherland:  
To her you gave your life and limbs.

## HERBERT READ

### *Body*

I gave these hands and gave these arms  
I gave my head of ravelled hair.

### *Soul*

You gave your sweet round breasts  
like Agatha who was your Saint.

### *Body*

Mary Aegyptiaca  
is the pattern of my greatest loss.

### *Soul*

To whom in nakedness and want  
God sent a holy man.  
Who clothed her, shrived her, gave her peace  
before her spirit left the earth.

### *Body*

My sacrifice was made to gain  
the secrets of these hostile men.

### *Soul*

I hover round your fameless features  
barred from Heaven by light electric.

### *Body*

All men who find these mauled remains  
will pray to Mary for your swift release.

### *Soul*

The cry that left your dying lips  
was heard by God.

## HERBERT READ

### *Body*

I died for France.

### *Soul*

A bright mantle fell across your bleeding limbs.  
Your face averted shone with sacred fire.  
So be content In this war  
many men have perished not blessed  
with faith in a cause, a country or a God  
not less martyrs than Herod's Victims, Ursula's Virgins  
or any massed innocents massacred.

### *Body*

Such men give themselves not to their God but to their fate  
die thinking the face of God not love but hate.

### *Soul*

Those who die for a cause die comforted and coy;  
believing their cause God's cause they die with joy.

## III. MEDITATION OF THE WAKING ENGLISH OFFICER

I wake: I am alive: there is a bell  
sounding with the dream's retreating surf  
O catch the lacey hem dissolved in light  
that creeps along the healing tendrils of a mind  
still drugged with sleep. Why must my day  
kill my dreams? Days of hate. But yes a bell  
beats really on this air, a mad bell.  
The peasants stir behind that screen.  
Listen: they mutter now: they sing

## HERBERT READ

in their old cracked voices, intone  
a litany. There are no guns  
only these voices of thanksgiving. Can it be?  
Yes yes yes: it is peace, peace!  
The world is very still, and I am alive!  
Look: I am alive, alive, alive.  
O limbs, your white radiance  
no longer to stand against bloody shot  
this heart secure, to live and worship  
to go God's way, to grow in faith  
to fight with and not against the will!  
That day has come at last! Suspended life  
renews its rhythmic beat. I live!  
Now can I love and strive, as I have dreamt.

Lie still, and let this litany  
of simple voices and the jubilant bell  
ease rebirth. First there are the dead to bury  
O God, the dead. How can God's bell  
ring out from that unholy ambush?  
That tower of death! In excess of horror  
war died. The nerve was broken  
frayed men fought obscenely then: there was no fair joy  
no glory in the strife, no blessed wrath.  
Man's mind cannot excel  
mechanic might except in savage sin.  
Our broken bodies oiled the engines: mind was grit.

Shall I regret my pact? Envy that friend  
who risked ignominy, insult, gaol  
rather than stain his hands with human blood?  
And left his fellow men. Such lonely pride

## HERBERT READ

easy it is to believe in God: extend the self  
to communion with the infinite, the eternal.  
But haggard in the face of death  
deprived of all earthly comfort, all hope of life,  
the soul a distilled essence, held  
in a shaking cup, spilled  
by a spit of lead, saved  
by chance alone  
very real  
in its silky bag of skin, its bond of bone,  
so little and so limited,  
there's no extenuation then.  
Fate is in facts: the only hope  
an unknown chance.

So I have won through. What now?  
Will faith rise triumphant from the wreck  
despair once more evaded in a bold  
assertion of the self: self to God related  
self in God attained, self a segment  
of the eternal circle, the wheel  
of Heaven, which through the dust of days  
and stagnant darkness steadily revolves?  
The bells of hell ring ting-a-ling  
for you but not for me—for you  
whose gentian eyes stared from the cold  
impassive alp of death. You betrayed us  
at the last hour of the last day  
playing the game to the end  
your smile the only comment  
on the well-done deed. What mind  
have you carried over the confines?

## HERBERT READ

Your fair face was noble of its kind  
some visionary purpose cut the lines  
clearly on that countenance.  
But you are defeated: once again  
the meek inherit the kingdom of God.  
No might can win against this wandering  
wavering grace of humble men.  
You die, in all your power and pride:  
I live, in my meekness justified.

When first this fury caught us, then  
I vowed devotion to the rights of men  
would fight for peace once it came again  
from this unwilling war pass gallantly  
to wars of will and justice.  
That was before I had faced death  
day in day out, before hope had sunk  
to a little pool of bitterness.  
Now I see, either the world is mechanic force  
and this the last tragic act, portending  
endless hate and blind reversion  
back to the tents and healthy lusts  
of animal men: or we act  
God's purpose in an obscure way.  
Evil can only to the Reason stand  
in scheme or scope beyond the human mind.  
God seeks the perfect man, planned  
to love him as a friend: our savage fate  
a fire to burn our dross  
to temper us to finer stock  
man emerging in some inconceivèd span  
as something more than remnant of a dream.

## HERBERT READ

To that end worship God, join the voices  
heard by these waking ears. God is love:  
in his will the meek heart rejoices  
doubting till the final grace a dove  
from Heaven descends and wakes the mind  
in light above the light of human kind  
in light celestial  
infinite and still  
eternal  
bright

It was necessary for my poetic purpose to take an incident from the War of 1914-18 which would serve as a focus for feeling and sentiments otherwise diffuse. The incident is true, and can be vouched for by several witnesses still living. But its horrors do not accuse any particular nation; they are representative of war and of human nature in war. It is not my business as a poet to condemn war (or, to be more exact, modern warfare). I only wish to present the universal aspects of a particular event. Judgement may follow, but should never precede or become embroiled with the act of poetry. It is for this reason that Milton's attitude to his Satan has so often been misunderstood.

## SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

1893-

306

### *The Sailor*

I HAVE a young love—  
A landward lass is she—  
And thus she entreated:  
'O tell me of the sea  
That on thy next voyage  
My thoughts may follow thee.'



## SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

I took her up a hill  
And showed her hills green,  
One after other  
With valleys between:  
So green and gentle, I said,  
Are the waves I've seen.

I led her by the hand  
Down the grassy way,  
And showed her the hedgerows  
That were white with May:  
So white and fleeting, I said,  
Is the salt sea-spray.

I bade her lean her head  
Down against my side,  
Rising and falling  
On my breath to ride:  
Thus rode the vessel, I said,  
On the rocking tide.

For she so young is, and tender,  
I would not have her know  
What it is that I go to  
When to sea I must go,  
Lest she should lie awake and tremble  
When the great storm-winds blow.

307

*In Festubert*

**N**OW every thing that shadowy thought  
 Lets peer with bedlam eyes at me  
 From alley-ways and thoroughfares  
 Of cynic and ill memory  
 Lifts a gaunt head, sullenly stares,  
 Shuns me as a child has shunned  
 A whizzing dragon-fly that daps  
 Above his mudded pond.

Now bitter frosts, muffling the morn  
 In old days, crunch the grass anew;  
 There where the floods made fields forlorn  
 The glinzy ice grows thicker through.  
 The pollards glower like mummies when  
 Thieves break into a pyramid,  
 Inscrutable as those dead men  
 With painted mask and balm-cloth hid;  
 And all the old delight is cursed  
 Redoubling present undelight.  
 Splinter, crystal, splinter and burst;  
 And sear no more with second sight.

308

*Forefathers*

1916

**H**ERE they went with smock and crook,  
 Toiled in the sun, lolled in the shade,  
 Here they mudded out the brook  
 And here their hatchet cleared the glade:  
 Harvest-supper woke their wit,  
 Huntsman's moon their wooings lit.

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

From this church they led their brides,  
From this church themselves were led  
Shoulder-high; on these waysides  
Sat to take their beer and bread.  
Names are gone—what men they were  
These their cottages declare.

Names are vanished, save the few  
In the old brown Bible scrawled;  
These were men of pith and thew,  
Whom the city never called;  
Scarce could read or hold a quill,  
Built the barn, the forge, the mill.

On the green they watched their sons  
Playing till too dark to see,  
As their fathers watched them once,  
As my father once watched me;  
While the bat and beetle flew  
On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unrecorded, unrenowned,  
Men from whom my ways begin,  
Here I know you by your ground  
But I know you not within—  
There is silence, there survives  
Not a moment of your lives.

Like the bee that now is blown  
Honey-heavy on my hand,  
From his toppling tansy-throne  
In the green tempestuous land—  
I'm in clover now, nor know  
Who made honey long ago.

AT Quincey's moat the squandering village ends,  
 And there in the alms-house dwell the dearest friends  
 Of all the village, two old dames that cling  
 As close as any true-loves in the spring.  
 Long, long ago they passed three-score-and-ten,  
 And in this doll's house lived together then;  
 All things they have in common being so poor,  
 And their one fear, Death's shadow at the door.  
 Each sundown makes them mournful, each sunrise  
 Brings back the brightness in their failing eyes.

How happy go the rich fair-weather days  
 When on the roadside folk stare in amaze  
 At such a honeycomb of fruit and flowers  
 As mellows round their threshold; what long hours  
 They gloat upon their steeping hollyhocks,  
 Bee's balsams, feathery southernwood and stocks,  
 Fiery dragon's-mouths, great mallow leaves  
 For salves, and lemon-plants in bushy sheaves,  
 Shagged Esau's-hands with five green finger-tips.  
 Such old sweet names are ever on their lips.

As pleased as little children where these grow  
 In cobbled pattens and worn gowns they go,  
 Proud of their wisdom when on gooseberry shoots  
 They stuck egg shells to fright from coming fruits  
 The brisk-billed rascals; scanning still to see  
 Their neighbour owls saunter from tree to tree,  
 Or in the hushing half-light mouse the lane  
 Long-winged and lordly.

But when those hours wane  
 Indoors they ponder, scared by the harsh storm

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

Whose pelting saracens on the window swarm,  
And listen for the mail to clatter past  
And church-clock's deep bay withering on the blast;  
They feed the fire that flings its freakish light  
On pictured kings and queens grotesquely bright,  
Platters and pitchers, faded calendars  
And graceful hour-glass trim with lavenders.

Many a time they kiss and cry and pray  
That both be summoned in the selfsame day,  
And wiseman linnet tinkling in his cage  
End too with them the friendship of old age,  
And all together leave their treasured room  
Some bell-like evening when the May's in bloom.

1920

310

### *Mole Catcher*

WITH coat like any mole's, as soft and black,  
And hazel bows bundled beneath his arm,  
With long-helved spade and rush-bag on his back,  
The trapper plods alone about the farm:  
And spies new mounds in the ripe pasture-land,  
And where the lob-worms writhe up in alarm  
And easy sinks the spade, he takes his stand  
Knowing the moles' dark high-road runs below:  
Then sharp and square he chops the turf, and day  
Gloats on the opened turnpike through the clay.

Out from his wallet hurry pin and prong,  
And trap, and noose to tie it to the bow;  
And then his grand arcanum, oily and strong,  
Found out by his forefather years ago  
To scent the peg and witch the moles along.

365

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

The bow is earthed and arched ready to shoot  
And snatch the death-knot fast round the first mole  
Who comes and snuffs well pleased and tries to root  
Past the sly nose peg; back again is put  
The mould, and death left smirking in the hole.  
The old man goes and tallies all his snares  
And finds the prisoners there and takes his toll.

And moles to him are only moles; but hares  
See him afield and scarcely cease to nip  
Their dinners, for he harms not them; he spares  
The drowning fly that of his ale would sip  
And throws the ant the crumbs of comradeship.  
And every time he comes into his yard  
Grey linnet knows he brings the groundsel sheaf,  
And clatters round the cage to be unbarred,  
And on his finger whistles twice as hard.—  
What his old vicar says is his belief,  
In the side pew he sits and hears the truth;  
And never misses once to ring his bell  
On Sundays night and morn, nor once since youth  
Has heard the chimes afield, but has heard tell  
There's not a peal in England sounds so well.

311

### *The Survival*

TO-DAY'S house makes to-morrow's road;  
I knew these heaps of stone  
When they were walls of grace and might,  
The country's honour, art's delight  
That over fountained silence showed  
Fame's final bastion.

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

Inheritance has found fresh work,  
Disunion union breeds;  
Beauty the strong, its difference lost,  
Has matter fit for flood and frost.  
Here's the true blood that will not shirk  
Life's new-commanding needs.

With curious costly zeal, O man,  
Raise orrery and ode;  
How shines your tower, the only one  
Of that especial site and stone!  
And even the dream's confusion can  
Sustain to-morrow's road.

312

### *Report on Experience*

I HAVE been young, and now am not too old;  
And I have seen the righteous forsaken,  
His health, his honour and his quality taken.  
This is not what we were formerly told.

I have seen a green country, useful to the race,  
Knocked silly with guns and mines, its villages vanished,  
Even the last rat and last kestrel banished—  
God bless us all, this was peculiar grace.

I knew Seraphina; Nature gave her hue,  
Glance, sympathy, note, like one from Eden.  
I saw her smile warp, heard her lyric deaden;  
She turned to harlotry;—this I took to be new.

Say what you will, our God sees how they run.  
These disillusion are His curious proving  
That He loves humanity and will go on loving;  
Over there are faith, life, virtue in the sun.

*The Little Clan*

OVER their edge of earth  
 They wearily tread,  
 Leaving the stone-grey dew—  
     The hungry grass;  
 Most proud in their own defeat,  
     These last men pass  
 This labouring grass that bears them  
     Little bread.

Too full their spring-tide flowed,  
     And ebbing then  
 Has left each hooker deep  
     Within salt grass;  
 All ebbs, yet lives in their song;  
     Song shall not pass  
 With these most desperate,  
     Most noble men!

Then, comfort your own sorrow;  
     Time has heard  
 One groping singer hold  
     A burning face;  
 You mourn no living Troy,  
     Then mourn no less  
 The living glory of  
     Each Gaelic word!



FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS

314

*Father and Son*

ONLY last week, walking the hushed fields  
Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,  
I came to where the road from Laracor leads  
To the Boyne river—that seemed more lake than river,  
Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds.

And walking longside an old weir  
Of my people's, where nothing stirs—only the shadowed  
Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air—  
I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,  
Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day  
He walked, taking stock of herds hid in their own breathing;  
And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his hand;  
Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in greeting  
Old friends—the wild blades, when he gallivanted the land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks—  
Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,  
Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,  
Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly  
loved me  
Till death drew its grey blind down his face.

315

*The Old Jockey*

HIS last days linger in that low attic  
That barely lets out the night,  
With its gabled window on Knackers' Alley,  
Just hoodwinking the light.

## FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS

He comes and goes by that gabled window  
And then on the window-pane  
He leans, as thin as a bottled shadow—  
A look and he's gone again:

Eyeing, maybe, some fine fish-women  
In the best shawls of the Coombe  
Or, maybe, the knife-grinder plying his treadle,  
A run of sparks from his thumb!

But, O you should see him gazing, gazing,  
When solemnly out on the road  
The horse-drays pass overladen with grasses,  
Each driver lost in his load;

Gazing until they return; and suddenly,  
As galloping by they race,  
From his pale eyes, like glass breaking,  
Light leaps on his face.

### 316     *Padraic O'Conaire—Gaelic Storyteller*

*(Died in the Fall of 1928)*

THEY'VE paid the last respects in sad tobacco  
And silent is this wake-house in its haze;  
They've paid the last respects; and now their whisky  
Flings laughing words on mouths of prayer and praise;  
And so young couples huddle by the gables,  
O let them grope home through the hedgy night—  
Alone I'll mourn my old friend, while the cold dawn  
Thins out the holy candlelight.

## FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS

Respects are paid to one loved by the people;  
Ah, was he not—among our mighty poor—  
The sudden wealth cast on those pools of darkness,  
Those bearing, just, a star's faint signature;  
And so he was to me, close friend, near brother,  
Dear Padraic of the wide and sea-cold eyes—  
So lovable, so courteous and noble,  
The very West was in his soft replies.

They'll miss his heavy stick and stride in Wicklow—  
His story-talking down Winetavern Street,  
Where old men sitting in the wizen daylight  
Have kept an edge upon his gentle wit;  
While women on the grassy streets of Galway,  
Who hearken for his passing—but in vain,  
Shall hardly tell his step as shadows vanish  
Through archways of forgotten Spain.

Ah, they'll say: Padraic's gone again exploring;  
But now down glens of brightness, O he'll find  
An ale-house overflowing with wise Gaelic  
That's braced in vigour by the bardic mind,  
And there his thoughts shall find their own forefathers—  
In minds to whom our heights of race belong,  
In crafty men, who ribbed a ship or turned  
The secret joinery of song.

Alas, death mars the parchment of his forehead;  
And yet for him, I know, the earth is mild—  
The windy fidgets of September grasses  
Can never tease a mind that loved the wild;

FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS

So drink his peace—this grey juice of the barley  
Runs with a light that ever pleased his eye—  
While old flames nod and gossip on the hearthstone  
And only the young winds cry.

317      *Song for the Clatter Bones*

GOD rest that Jewy woman,  
Queen Jezebel, the bitch  
Who peeled the clothes from her shoulder-bones  
Down to her spent teats  
As she stretched out of the window  
Among the geraniums, where  
She chaffed and laughed like one half daft  
Titivating her painted hair—

King Jehu he drove to her,  
She tipped him a fancy beck;  
But he from his knacky side-car spoke  
'Who'll break that dewlapped neck?'  
And so she was thrown from the window;  
Like Lucifer she fell  
Beneath the feet of the horses and they beat  
The light out of Jezebel.

That corpse wasn't planted in clover;  
Ah, nothing of her was found  
Save those grey bones that Hare-foot Mike  
Gave me for their lovely sound;  
And as once her dancing body  
Made star-lit princes sweat  
So I'll just clack: though her ghost lacks a back  
There's music in the old bones yet.

FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS

318      *The Ballad of O'Bruadir*

**W**HEN first I took to cutlass, blunderbuss and gun,  
    *Rolling glory on the water;*  
With boarding and with broadside we made the Dutchmen run,  
    *Rolling glory on the water;*  
Then down among the captains in their green skin shoes,  
I sought for Hugh O'Bruadir and got but little news  
Till I shook him by the hand in the bay of Santa Cruz,  
    *Rolling glory on the water.*

O'Bruadir said kindly, 'You're a fresh blade from Mayo,  
    *Rolling glory on the water,*  
But come among my captains, to Achill back we go,  
    *Rolling glory on the water;*  
Although those Spanish beauties are dark and not so dear,  
I'd rather taste in Mayo, with April on the year,  
One bracing virgin female; so swing your canvas here,  
    *Rolling glory on the water!"*

'There's no man' said a stranger 'whose hand I'd sooner grip  
    *Rolling glory on the water.'*  
'Well I'm your man,' said Bruadir, 'and you're aboard my ship  
    *Rolling glory on the water.'*  
They drank to deeper friendship in ocean roguery;  
And rolled ashore together, but between you and me  
We found O'Bruadir dangling within an airy tree,  
    *Ghosting glory from the water!*

319

*Two Generations*

I TURNED and gave my strength to woman,  
Leaving untilled the stubborn field.  
Sinew and soul are gone to win her,  
Slow, and most perilous, her yield.

The son I got stood up beside me,  
With fire and quiet beauty filled;  
He looked upon me, then he looked  
Upon the field I had not tilled.

He kissed me, and went forth to labour.  
Where lonely tilth and moorland meet  
A gull above the ploughshare hears  
The ironic song of our defeat.

320

*The Old Man at the Crossing*

I SWEEP the street and lift me hat  
As persons come and persons go,  
Me lady and me gentleman:  
I lift me hat—but you don't know!

I've money by against I'm dead:  
A hearse and mourners there will be!  
And every sort of walking man  
Will stop to lift his hat to me!

LEONARD ALFRED GEORGE STRONG

321

*The knowledgeable Child*

I ALWAYS see,—I don't know why,—  
If any person's going to die.

That's why nobody talks to me.

There was a man who came to tea,

And when I saw that he would die

I went to him and said 'Good-bye,

'I shall not see you any more.'

He died that evening. Then, next door,

They had a little girl: she died

Nearly as quick, and Mummy cried

And cried, and ever since that day

She's made me promise not to say.

But folks are still afraid of me,

And, where they've children, nobody

Will let me next or nigh to them

For fear I'll say good-bye to them.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

322

*Agamemnon's Tomb*

1897-

TOMB

A hollow hateful word

A bell, a leaden bell the dry lips mock,

Though the word is as mud or clay in its own sound;

A hollow noise that echoes its own emptiness,

Such is this awful thing, this cell to hold the box.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

It is breathless, a sink of damp and mould, that's all,  
Where bones make dust and move not otherwise;  
Who loves the spider or the worm, for this,  
That they starve in there, but are its liveliness?  
The grave-cloth, coldest and last night-gown,  
That's worn for ever till its rags are gone,  
This comes at the end when every limb is straight,  
When mouth and eyes are shut in mockery of sleep.  
Much comes before this, for the miser hand  
That clutches at an edge of wood, a chair, a table,  
Must have its fingers broken, have its bones cracked back,  
It's the rigor mortis, death struggle out of life,  
A wrestling at the world's edge for which way to go.

There are all other deaths, but all are sisters;  
What dreams must they have who die so quiet in sleep,  
What dread pursuings into arms of terror,  
Feared all through life, gigantic in dark corridors,  
A giant in a wood, or a swirling of deep waters;  
This may be worst of all, for pain is material,  
And it has lulls, or you may pray for them,  
While, when the pain is worst, you pray for death,  
For swift delivery from heart and lungs,  
The tyrant machinery, the creaking engine,  
Lungs like wheezing bellows, heart like a clock that stops;  
To die frightened, with a scream that never comes  
That shivers with no shape out of the dumb dry lips,  
This is worse than pain, and worse than death, awake,  
For with that cry you're in the tomb already,  
There's its arch above you, there's its hand upon your mouth,  
Knock, knock, knock, these are the nails of the coffin,  
They go in easy, but must be wrenched out,



## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

For no strength can break them from the walled night within;  
They are little shining points, they are cloves that have no  
scent,

But the dead are kept in prison by such little things,  
Though little does it help them when that guard is gone.  
It is night, endless night, with not a chink of day,  
And if the coffin breaks there is no hope in that,  
The bones tumble out and only dogs will steal them;  
There is no escape, no tunnel back to life,  
And, soon, no person digging at the other end,  
For the living soon forget, but soon will join you there;  
The dead are but dead, there is no use for them,  
But who can realize that it ends with breath,  
That the heart is not a clock and will not wind once more?  
There is something in mortality that will not touch on death,  
That keeps the mind from it, that hides the coffin;  
And, if this were not so, there would be nought else,  
No other thing to think of; the skull would be the altar,  
There could be no prayer save rest for the skeleton  
That has jagged bones and cannot lie at comfort;  
The sweetest flowers soon wither there, they love it not.  
Who pondered too much on this would lie among the bones  
And sleep and wake by little contrast there,  
Finding them no different but always cold;  
The hermit's only plaything was the death's head in his cell,  
That he was long used to, that never stared at night  
Through eyes without lids, kissed away by something,  
With a mouth below that, bare and lipless,  
Eaten by the dust, quite burned away;  
But the hermit was not frightened, he had grown accustomed,  
For it is one sort of logic to be living with the dead,  
It's so slight a difference, a stone dropped from the hand

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

Picked up not long ago, now dropped again;  
This is one remedy, to know the dead from near,  
But it ends at nothing, there's no more than that,  
The fright of death goes, but not the dreading of its dullness;  
It is endless, dull, and comfortless, it never stops  
There is no term to it, no first nor last,  
There is no mercy in that dark land of death.  
Think of death's companions, the owl, the bat, the spider,  
And they can only enter when the tomb is broken,  
They live in that darkness, in that lair of treachery,  
And crawl, and spin their webs, and shake their speckled  
wings,  
And come out in the double night, the night that's dark outside,  
So they bring no light back on their fattened bodies.  
The spider, with its eight legs, runs and crawls,  
With dreadful stomach, hairy paunch in air,  
While the bat hangs, asleep, with gripping claws above  
Holding to the stone ledge fouled by it;  
He'll wake, when it's night outside, and wave his skinny  
wings,  
And fly out through the crevice where the spider weaves anew,  
Her silk will choke and fill it when the bat comes back,  
And the bat, more clumsy, rends the webs asunder.  
Such are death's companions and their twilit lives,  
They keep by dry bones and yet they profit by them,  
Living on death's bounties, on his dying portion,  
Paid like marriage money, or the fees for school;  
This, in stone or marble, is the home of others,  
For they share it, but too soon, and it is theirs no more.  
There is nothing at the other end, no door at which to listen,  
There is nothing, nothing, not a breath beyond,  
Give up your hopes of it, you'll wake no more.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

The poor are fast forgotten,  
They outnumber the living, but where are all their bones?  
For every man alive there are a million dead,  
Has their dust gone into earth that it is never seen?  
There should be no air to breathe, with it so thick,  
No space for wind to blow, or rain to fall;  
Earth should be a cloud of dust, a soil of bones,  
With no room, even, for our skeletons;  
It is wasted time to think of it, to count its grains,  
When all are alike and there's no difference in them;  
They wait in the dark corridors, in earth's black galleries,  
But the doors never open; they are dead, dead, dead.  
Ah! Seek not the difference in king or beggar:  
The King has his gold with him, that will not buy,  
It is better to have starved and to be used to it.  
Is there no comfort down the long dead years,  
No warmth in prison, no love left for dead bones;  
Does no one come to kiss them? Answer, none, none,  
none.  
Yet that was their longing, to be held and given,  
To be handed to death while held in arms that loved  
them,  
For his greater care, who saw that they were loved  
And would take note of it and favour them in prison;  
But, instead, he stood more near to them, his chill was in  
them,  
And the living were warm, the last of love was warm;  
Oh! One more ray of it, one beam before the winter,  
Before they were unborn, beyond the blind, unborn,  
More blind and puny, carried back into the dark,  
But without rumour, with no fate to come,  
Nothing but waiting, waiting long for nothing.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

It was too late to weep, this was the last of time,  
The light flickered, but tears would dim it more:  
It was better to be calm and keep the taste of life;  
But a sip or two of life, and then, for ever, death.  
Oh! The cold, the sinking cold, the falling from the edge  
Where love was no help and could not hold one back,  
Falling, falling, falling into blackest dark,  
Falling while hands touched one, while the lips felt warm,  
If one was loved, and was not left alone.

Now it was so little that a babe was more,  
No more of self, a little feeble thing  
That love could not help,  
That none could love for what it was;  
It looked, and love saw it, but it could not answer:  
Life's mystery was finished, only death was clear,  
It was sorry for the living, it was glad to die,  
Death was its master, it belonged to death.

O kiss it no more, it is so cold and pale,  
It is not of this world, it is no part of us;  
Not the soul we loved, but something pitiful  
The hands should not touch. Oh! Leave it where it lies;  
Let the dead where they die; come out among the living;  
Weep not over dead bones; your tears are wasted.

There's no escape, there is no subterfuge,  
Death is decay; nor was it any better,  
The mummied dead body, with brain pulled through the  
nose,  
With entrails cut out, and all the mutilation  
Wrapped in sweet bandages, bound up with herbs:  
Death is not aromatic, it is false with flowers,

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

It has no ferment, it is always bitter;  
The Egyptians live for ever, but not like themselves,  
They are clenched, tortured, stifled, not the portrait of  
the lid;  
They'd be better as old bones, and then might lie at peace.

All is degradation in the chambers of dead bones,  
Nor marble, nor porphyry, but make it worse  
For the mind sees, inside it, to the stained wet shroud  
Where all else is dry, and only that is fluid,  
So are carven tombs in the core to their cool marble,  
The hollowed out heart of it, the inner cell,  
All is degradation in the halls of the dead;  
I never thought other things of death, until  
The climb to Mycenae, when the wind and rain  
Stormed at the tombs, when the rocks were as clouds  
Struck still in the hurricane, driven to the hillside,  
And rain poured in torrents, all the air was water.  
The wet grey Argolide wept below,  
The winds wailed and tore their hair,  
The plain of Argos mourned and was in mist,  
In mist tossed and shaken, in a sea of wrack;  
This was the place of weeping, the day of tears,  
As if all the dead were here, in all their pain,  
Not stilled, nor assuaged, but aching to the bone:  
It was their hell, they had no other hope than this,  
But not alone, it was not nothingness:  
The wind shrieked, the rain poured, the steep wet stones  
Were a cliff in a whirlwind, by a raging sea,  
Hidden by the rain-storm pelting down from heaven  
To that hollow valley loud with melancholy;  
But the dark hill opened. And it was the tomb.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

A passage led unto it, cut through the hill,  
Echoing, rebounding with the million-ringing rain.  
With walls, ever higher, till the giant lintel  
Of huge stone, jagged and immense, rough-hewn  
That held up the mountain: it was night within:  
Silence and peace, nor sound of wind nor rain,  
But a huge dome, glowing with the day from out  
Let in by the narrow door, diffused by that,  
More like some cavern under ocean's lips,  
Fine and incredible, diminished in its stones,  
For the hand of man had fitted them, of dwindling size,  
Row after row, round all the hollow dome,  
As scales of fish, as of the ocean's fins,  
Pinned with bronze flowers that were, now, all fallen  
But the stones kept their symmetry, their separate shape  
To the dome's high cupola of giant stone:  
All was high and solemn in the cavern tomb:  
If this was death, then death was poetry,  
First architecture of the man-made years,  
This was peace for the accursed Atridae:  
Here lay Agamemnon in a cell beyond,  
A little room of death, behind the solemn dome  
Not burnt, nor confined, but laid upon the soil  
With a golden mask upon his dead man's face  
For a little realm of light within that shadowed room:  
And ever the sun came, every day of life,  
Though less than star-point in that starry sky,  
To the shadowed meridian, and sloped again,  
Nor lit his armour, nor the mask upon his face,  
For they burned in eternal night, they smouldered in it;  
Season followed season, there was summer in the tomb,  
Through hidden crevice, down that point of light,

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

Summer of loud wings and of the ghosts of blossom;  
One by one, as harvesters, all heavy laden,  
The bees sought their corridor into the dome  
With honey of the asphodel, the flower of death,  
Or thyme, rain-sodden, and more sweet for that;  
Here was their honeycomb, high in the roof,  
I heard sweet summer from their drumming wings,  
Though it wept and rained and was the time of tears;  
They made low music, they murmured in the tomb,  
As droning nuns through all a shuttered noon,  
Who prayed in this place of death, and knew it not.

How sweet such death, with honey from the flowers,  
A little air, a little light, and drone of wings,  
To long monotony, to prison of the tomb!  
But he did not know it. His bones, picked clean,  
Were any other bones. The trick is in our mind:  
They love not a bed, nor raiment for their bones,  
They are happy on cold stone or in the aching water,  
And neither care, nor care not, they are only dead.  
It once was Agamemnon, and we think him happy:  
O false, false hope! How empty his happiness,  
All for a fine cavern and the hum of bees.

I went again to him, another year,  
And still it stormed, the corn-ripe Argolide  
Rattled in dust, in burning grain of sand,  
Earth lay in fever by the tombed Atridae.  
O happy, happy death, and only happiness of that,  
There is none other, where it ever weeps  
In the ripened corn and round the silent cavern,  
First, and best building of the man-made years.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

O happy Agamemnon, who was luckless, living,  
Happy in death, in the hollow haunted room,  
Your very name is the treading of a spectre:  
O speak to us of death, tell us of its mysteries,  
Not here, not here, not in the hollow tomb,  
But at the Muse's fountain, the Castalian spring,  
By the plane-trees you planted, in the sacred shade.  
The leaves speak in syllables, the live-long hours,  
Their leaves are your leaves, and their shade is yours;  
Listen, listen, listen to the voice of water  
Alive and living, more than Agamemnon,  
Whose name is sound of footsteps on the shaking boards,  
A tragedian's ghost, a shadow on the rocks.  
You are dead, you are dead, and all the dead are nothing to us,  
There's nothing, nothing, nothing, not a breath beyond:  
O give up every hope of it, we'll wake no more,  
We are the world and it will end with us:  
The heart is not a clock, it will not wind again,  
The dead are but dead, there is no use for them,  
They neither care, nor care not, they are only dead.

## EDWARD DAVISON

1898-

323

### *In this Dark House*

I SHALL come back to die  
From a far place at last,  
After my life's carouse  
In the old bed to lie  
Remembering the past  
In this dark house.



## EDWARD DAVISON

Because of a clock's chime  
In the long waste of night  
I shall awake and wait  
At that calm, lonely time  
Each sound and smell and sight  
Mysterious and innate:

Some shadow on the wall  
When curtains by the door  
Move in a draught of wind;  
Or else a light footfall  
In a near corridor;  
Even to feel the kind  
Caress of a cool hand  
Smoothing the dragged hair  
Back from my shrunken brow,  
And strive to understand  
The woman's presence there,  
And whence she came, and how.

What gust of wind that night  
Will mutter her lost name  
Through windows open wide,  
And twist the flickering light  
Of a sole candle's flame  
Smoking from side to side,  
Till the last spark it blows  
Sets a moth's wings aflame  
As the faint flame goes out?

Some distant door may close;  
Perhaps a heavy chair  
On bare floors dragged about

EDWARD DAVISON

O'er the low ceiling sound,  
And the thin twig of a tree  
Knock on my window-pane  
Till all the night around  
Is listening with me,  
While like a noise of rain  
Leaves rustle in the wind.

Then from the inner gloom  
The scratching of a mouse  
May echo down my mind  
And sound around the room  
In this dark house.

The vague scent of a flower,  
Smelt then in that warm air  
From gardens drifting in,  
May slowly overpower  
The vapid lavender,  
Till feebly I begin  
To count the scents I knew  
And name them one by one,  
And search the names for this.

Dreams will be swift and few  
Ere that last night be done,  
And gradual silences  
In each long interim  
Of halting time awake  
All conscious sense confuse:  
Shadows will grow more dim,  
And sound and scent forsake  
The dark, ere dawn ensues.

EDWARD DAVISON

In the new morning then,  
So fixed the stare and fast,  
The calm unseeing eye  
Will never close again.

I shall come back at last  
In this dark house to die.

RICHARD HUGHES

324

*The Sermon*

1900—

LIKE gript stick  
Still I sit:  
Eyes fixed on far small eyes,  
Full of it:  
On the old, broad face,  
The hung chin;  
Heavy arms, surplice  
Worn through and worn thin.  
Probe I the hid mind  
Under the gross flesh:  
Clutch at poetic words,  
Follow their mesh  
Scarce heaving breath.  
Clutch, marvel, wonder,  
Till the words end.  
  
Stilled is the muttered thunder:  
The hard few people wake,  
Gather their books, and go.  
—Whether their hearts could break  
How can I know?

RICHARD HUGHES

325

*Felo de Se*

**I**F I were stone dead and buried under,  
Is there a part of me would still wander,  
Shiver, mourn, and cry Alack,  
With no body to its back?

When brain grew mealy, turned to dust,  
Would lissom Mind, too, suffer rust?  
Immortal Soul grow imbecile,  
Having no brain to think and feel?

—Or grant it be as priests say,  
And growth come on my death-day:  
Suppose Growth came: would Certainty?  
Or would Mind still a quester be,

Frame deeper mysteries, not find them out,  
And wander in a larger doubt?  
—Alas! If to mind's petty stir  
Death prove so poor a silencer:

Though veins when emptied a few hours  
Of this hot blood, might suckle flowers:  
From spiritual flames that scorch me  
Never, never were I free!

Then back, Death, till I call thee!  
Hast come too soon!  
—Thou silly worm, gnaw not  
Yet thine intricate cocoon.

RICHARD HUGHES

326

*Old Cat Care*

*Outside the Cottage*

**G**REEN-EYED Care  
May prowl and glare  
And poke his snub, be-whiskered nose:  
But Door fits tight  
Against the Night:  
Through criss-cross cracks no evil goes.  
  
Window is small:  
No room at all  
For Worry and Money, his shoulder-bones:  
Chimney is wide,  
But Smoke's inside  
And happy Smoke would smother his moans.  
  
Be-whiskered Care  
May prowl out there:  
But I never heard  
He caught the Blue Bird.

327

*Glaucopis*

**J**OHN FANE DINGLE  
By Rumney Brook  
Shot a crop-cared owl,  
For pigeon mistook:  
  
Caught her by the lax wing.  
—She, as she dies,  
Thrills his warm soul through  
With her deep eyes.

## RICHARD HUGHES

Corpse-eyes are eerie:  
Tiger-eyes fierce:  
John Fane Dingle found  
Owl-eyes worse.

Owl-eyes on night-clouds,  
Constant as Fate:  
Owl-eyes in baby's face:  
On dish and plate:

Owl-eyes, without sound.  
—Pale of hne  
John died, of no complaint,  
With owl-eyes too.

328

### *The Walking Road*

THE World is all orange-round:  
The sea smells salt between:  
The strong hills climb on their own backs,  
Coloured and damascene,  
Cloud-flecked and sunny-green;  
Knotted and straining up,  
Up, with still hands and cold:  
Grip at the slipping sky,  
Yet cannot hold:  
Round twists old Earth, and round,  
Stillness not yet found.

Plains like a flat dish, too,  
Shudder and spin:  
Roads in a pattern crawl  
Scratched with a pin

## RICHARD HUGHES

Across the fields' dim shagreen:  
—Dusty their load:  
But over the craggy hills  
Wanders the walking road.

Broad as the hill's broad,  
Rough as the world's rough, too:  
Long as the Age is long,  
Ancient and true,  
Swinging, and broad, and long,  
Craggy, strong.

Gods sit like milestones  
On the edge of the Road, by the Moon's sill;  
Man has feet, feet that swing, pound the high hill  
Above and above, until  
He stumble and widely spill  
His dusty bones.

Round twists old Earth, and round,  
Stillness not yet found.

329

### *The Image*

**D**IM the light in your faces: be passionless in the room.  
Snuffed are the tapers, and bitterly hang on the flower-  
less air:

See: and this is the image of her they will lay in the tomb;  
Clear, and waxen, and cooled in the mass of her hair.

Quiet the tears in your voices: feel lightly, finger, for finger  
In love: then see how like is the image, but lifelessly fashioned  
And sightless, calm, unloving. Who is the Artist? Linger  
And ponder whither has flitted his sitter impassioned.

## RICHARD HUGHES

330

### *Winter*

**S**NOW wind-whipt to ice  
Under a hard sun:  
Stream-runnels curdled hoar  
Crackle, cannot run.

Robin stark dead on twig,  
Song stiffened in it:  
Fluffed feathers may not warm  
Bone-thin linnet:

Big-eyed rabbit, lost,  
Scrabbles the snow,  
Searching for long-dead grass  
With frost-bit toe:

Mad-tired on the road  
Old Kelly goes;  
Through crookt fingers snuffs the air  
Knife-cold in his nose.

Hunger-weak, snow-dazzled,  
Old Thomas Kelly  
Thrusts his bit hands, for warmth,  
'Twixt waistcoat and belly.

331

### *The Ruin*

**G**ONE are the coloured princes, gone echo, gone laughter:  
Drips the blank roof: and the moss creeps after.

Dead is the crumbled chimney: all mellowed to rotting  
The wall-tints, and the floor-tints, from the spotting  
Of the rain, from the wind and slow appetite  
Of patient mould: and of the worms that bite  
At beauty all their innumerable lives.



## RICHARD HUGHES

—But the sudden nip of knives,  
The lady aching for her stiffening lord,  
The passionate-fearful bride,  
And beaded Pallor clamped to the torment-board,  
Leave they no ghosts, no memories by the stairs?  
No sheeted glimmer treading floorless ways?  
No haunting melody of lovers' airs,  
Nor stealthy chill upon the noon of days?  
No: for the dead and senseless walls have long forgotten  
What passionate hearts beneath the grass lie rotten.  
Only from roofs and chimneys pleasantly sliding  
Tumbles the rain in the early hours:  
Patters its thousand feet on the flowers,  
Cools its small grey feet in the grasses.

## ROY CAMPBELL

1902—

332

### *The Serf*

HIS naked skin clothed in the torrid mist  
That puffs in smoke around the patient hooves,  
The ploughman drives, a slow somnambulist,  
And through the green his crimson furrow grooves.  
His heart, more deeply than he wounds the plain,  
Long by the rasping share of insult torn,  
Red clod, to which the war-cry once was rain  
And tribal spears the fatal sheaves of corn,  
Lies fallow now. But as the turf divides  
I see in the slow progress of his strides  
Over the toppled clods and falling flowers,  
The timeless, surly patience of the serf  
That moves the nearest to the naked earth  
And ploughs down palaces, and thrones, and towers.

ROY CAMPBELL

333

*The Zulu Girl*

WHEN in the sun the hot red acres smoulder,  
Down where the sweating gang its labour plies,  
A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder  
Unslings her child tormented by the flies.

She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled  
By thorn-trees: purpled with the blood of ticks,  
While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,  
Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks,

His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,  
Tugs like a puppy, grunting as he feeds:  
Through his frail nerves her own deep languors ripple  
Like a broad river sighing through its reeds.

Yet in that drowsy stream his flesh imbibes  
An old unquenched unsmotherable heat—  
The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,  
The sullen dignity of their defeat.

Her body looms above him like a hill  
Within whose shade a village lies at rest,  
Or the first cloud so terrible and still  
That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

334

*The Sisters*

AFTER hot loveless nights, when cold winds stream  
Sprinkling the frost and dew, before the light,  
Bored with the foolish things that girls must dream  
Because their beds are empty of delight,

## ROY CAMPBELL

Two sisters rise and strip. Out from the night  
Their horses run to their low-whistled pleas—  
Vast phantom shapes with eyeballs rolling white  
That sneeze a fiery steam about their knees:

Through the crisp manes their stealthy prowling hands,  
Stronger than curbs, in slow caresses rove,  
They gallop down across the milk-white sands  
And wade far out into the sleeping cove:

The frost stings sweetly with a burning kiss  
As intimate as love, as cold as death:  
Their lips, whereon delicious tremors hiss,  
Fume with the ghostly pollen of their breath.

Far out on the grey silence of the flood  
They watch the dawn in smouldering gyres expand  
Beyond them: and the day burns through their blood  
Like a white candle through a shuttered hand.

335

### *Autumn*

I LOVE to see, when leaves depart,  
The clear anatomy arrive,  
Winter, the paragon of art,  
That kills all forms of life and feeling  
Save what is pure and will survive.

Already now the clanging chains  
Of geese are harnessed to the moon:  
Stripped are the great sun-clouding planes:  
And the dark pines, their own revealing,  
Let in the needles of the noon.

## ROY CAMPBELL

Strained by the gale the olives whiten  
Like hoary wrestlers bent with toil  
And, with the vines, their branches lighten  
To brim our vats where summer lingers  
In the red froth and sun-gold oil.

Soon on our hearth's reviving pyre  
Their rotted stems will crumble up:  
And like a ruby, panting fire,  
The grape will redden on your fingers  
Through the lit crystal of the cup.

## MICHAEL ROBERTS

1902-

336

### *Les Planches-en-Montagnes*

WHERE I go are flowers blooming  
And the foaming waters fuming  
Where in defiles stubborn boulders  
Set in rubble hunch their shoulders.

At each crevice root and branches  
Grip the gully's weathered haunches,  
Though I go where bluebells ringing  
Swell cicadas' ceaseless singing.

Far above, the insulators,  
Hiss and spark like commutators,  
For I go where bees are humming  
And dynamic turbines drumming.

Rocks and boulders are abolished  
Under engines brightly polished;  
Angular detritus is  
Crushed to concrete terraces.

## MICHAEL ROBERTS

Roses bloom in pillared gardens;  
Spindrift blown to rainbow hardens  
Cool cement in fashioned fountains;  
Sunlit pools reflect the mountains.

Here untended roar machines  
In mastery of black ravines.

337

### *Midnight*

I HAVE thrown wide my window  
And looked upon the night,  
And seen Arcturus burning  
In chaos, proudly bright.

The powdered stars above me  
Have littered heaven's floor—  
A thousand I remember;  
I saw a myriad more.

I have forgotten thousands,  
For deep and deep between,  
My mind built up the darkness  
Of space, unheard, unseen.

I held my hands to heaven  
To hold perfection there,  
But through my fingers streaming  
Went time, as thin as air;

And I must close my window  
And draw a decent blind  
To screen from outer darkness  
The chaos of the mind.

338     *The Old Woman of Beare regrets Lost  
Youth*

(i)

I, THE old woman of Beare,  
Once a shining shift would wear,  
Now and since my beauty's fall  
I have scarce a shift at all.

Plump no more I sigh for these,  
Bones bare beyond belief.  
Ebbtide is all my grief;  
I am ebbing like the seas.

It is pay  
And not men ye love to-day,  
But when we were young, ah then  
We gave all our hearts to men.

Men most dear,  
Horseman, huntsman, charioteer.  
We gave them love with all our will  
But the measure did not fill;

When to-day men ask you fair,  
And get little for their care,  
And the mite they get from you  
Leaves their bodies bent in two.

And long since the foaming steed,  
And the chariot with its speed,  
And the charioteer went by—  
God be with them all, say I

## FRANK O'CONNOR

Luck has left me, I go late  
To the dark house where they wait,  
When the Son of God thinks fit  
Let Him call me home to it.

Oh, my hands when they are seen  
Are so bony and so thin  
That a boy might start in dread  
Feeling them about his head.

(ii)

Girls are gay  
When the year draws on to May,  
But for me, so poor am I,  
Sun will never light the day.

Though I care  
Nothing now to bind my hair;  
I had headgear bright enough  
When the kings for love went bare.

'Tis not age that makes my pain  
But the eye that sees so plain  
That when all I love decays  
Femon's ways are gold again.

Femon, Bregon, sacring stone,  
Sacring stone and Ronan's throne  
Storms have sacked so long that now  
Tomb and sacring stone are one.

Where are they? Ah! well I know  
Old and toiling bones that row  
Alma's flood, or by its deep  
Sleep in cold that slept not so.

## FRANK O'CONNOR

Welladay

Every child outlives its play,  
Year on year has worn my flesh  
Since my fresh sweet strength went grey.

And, my God

Once again for ill or good  
Spring will come and I shall see  
Everything but me renewed.

Summer sun and autumn sun,  
These I knew and these are gone,  
And the winter time of men  
Comes and these come not again.

(iii)

And 'Amen!' I cry and 'Woe'  
That the boughs are shaken bare,  
And that candle-light and feast  
Leave me to the dark and prayer.

I that had my day with kings,  
And drank deep of mead and wine  
Drink whey-water with old hags,  
Sitting in their rags, and pine.

'That my cups be cups of whey!'  
'That Thy will be done,' I pray,  
But the prayer Oh Living God,  
Stirs up madness in my blood.

And I shout 'Thy locks are grey!'  
At the mantle that I stroke,  
Then I grieve and murmur 'Nay  
I am grey and not my cloak.'



FRANK O'CONNOR

And of eyes that loved the sun  
Age my grief has taken one,  
And the other too will take  
Soon for good proportion's sake.

Floodtide!  
Flood or ebb upon the strand?  
What to thee the flood had brought  
Ebbtide sweeps from out thy hand.

Floodtide!  
And the swifter tides that fall,  
All have reached me ebb and flow,  
Ay, and now I know them all!

Happy Island of the sea,  
Tide on tide shall come to thee,  
But to me no waters fare  
Though the beach is stark and bare.

Passing I can hardly say  
'Here is such a place.' To-day  
What was water far and wide  
Changes with the ebbing tide.  
Ebbtide.

*(From the Irish.)*

339

*Autumn*

WOMAN full of wile,  
Take your hand away,  
Nothing tempts me now,  
Sick for love you pray?

FRANK O'CONNOR

See this hair how grey,  
See this flesh how weak,  
See this blood gone cold—  
Tell me what you seek.  
Think me not perverse,  
Never bow your head;  
Let love last as now,  
Slender witch, instead.  
Take your mouth from mine,  
Kissing's bitterer still;  
Flesh from flesh must part  
Lest of warmth come will.  
Your twined branching hair,  
Your grey eye dew-bright,  
Your rich rounded breast  
Turn to lust the sight.  
All but fill the bed  
Now that grey hairs fall,  
Woman full of wile  
I would give you all!

*(From the Irish.)*

340

*A Learned Mistress*

TELL him the tale is a lie!  
I love him as much as my life,  
So why be jealous of me?  
I love him and loathe his wife.  
If he kill me through jealousy now  
His wife will perish of spite,  
He will die of grief for his wife,  
So three shall die in a night.

FRANK O'CONNOR

All blessings from heaven to earth  
On the head of the woman I hate,  
And the man I love as my life,  
Sudden death be his fate!

*(From the Irish.)*

341 *Prayer for the Speedy End of Three  
Great Misfortunes*

THERE be three things seeking my death,  
All at my heels run wild—  
Hang them, oh God, all three!—  
Devil, maggot and child.

So much does each of them crave  
The morsel that falls to his share  
He cares not a thraneen what  
Falls to the other pair.

If the devil, that crafty man,  
Can capture my sprightly soul,  
My money may go to my children,  
My flesh to the worm in the hole.

My children think more of the money  
That falls to them when I die,  
Than a soul that they could not spend,  
A body that none would buy.

And how would the maggots fare  
On a soul too thin to eat  
And money too tough to chew?  
They must have my body for meat.

FRANK O'CONNOR

Christ, speared by a fool that was blind,  
Christ, nailed to a naked tree,  
Since these three are waiting my end,  
Hang them, oh Christ, all three!

*(From the Irish.)*

342

*The Student*

THE student's life is pleasant,  
And pleasant is his labour,  
Search all Ireland over  
You'll find no better neighbour.

Nor lords nor petty princes  
Dispute the student's pleasure,  
Nor chapter stints his purse  
Nor stewardship his leisure.

None orders early rising,  
Calf-rearing or cow-tending,  
Nor nights of toilsome vigil,  
His time is his for spending.

He takes a hand at draughts,  
And plucks a harp-string bravely,  
And fills his nights with courting  
Some golden-haired light lady.

And when spring-time is come,  
The ploughshaft's there to follow,  
A fistful of goosequills,  
And a straight deep furrow!

*(From the Irish.)*

FRANK O'CONNOR

343

*A Grey Eye weeping*

*'Having gone with a poem to Sir Valentine Brown and gotten from him nothing but denial, rejection and flat refusal, the poet made these lines extempore.'*

**T**HAT my old mournful heart was pierced in this black doom,

That foreign devils have made our land a tomb,  
That the sun that was Munster's glory has gone down,  
Has made me travel to seek you, Valentine Brown.

That royal Cashel is bare of house and guest,  
That Brian's turreted home is the otter's nest,  
That the kings of the land have neither land nor crown,  
Has made me travel to seek you, Valentine Brown.

That the wild deer wanders afar, that it perishes now,  
That alien ravens croak on the topmost bough,  
That fish are no more in stream or streamlet lit by the sun,  
Has made me travel to seek you, Valentine Brown.

Dernish away in the west—and her master banned;  
Hamburg the refuge of him that has lost his land;  
Two old grey eyes that weep; great verse that lacks renown,  
Have made me travel to seek you, Valentine Brown.

*(From the Irish of Egan O'Rahilly.)*

344

*Kilcash*

**W**HAT shall we do for timber?  
The last of the woods is down,  
Kilcash and the house of its glory  
And the bell of the house are gone;

## FRANK O'CONNOR

The spot where her lady waited  
That shamed all women for grace  
When earls came sailing to greet her  
And Mass was said in that place.

My cross and my affliction  
Your gates are taken away,  
Your avenue needs attention,  
Goats in the garden stray;  
Your courtyard's filled with water  
And the great earls where are they?  
The earls, the lady, the people  
Beaten into the clay.

Nor sound of duck or of geese there  
Hawk's cry or eagle's call,  
Nor humming of the bees there  
That brought honey and wax for all,  
Nor the sweet gentle song of the birds there  
When the sun has gone down to the West  
Nor a cuckoo atop of the boughs there  
Singing the world to rest.

There's a mist there tumbling from branches  
Unstirred by night and by day,  
And a darkness falling from heaven,  
And our fortunes have ebbed away;  
There's no holly nor hazel nor ash there  
But pastures of rock and stone,  
The crown of the forest is withered  
And the last of its game is gone.

FRANK O'CONNOR

I beseech of Mary and Jesus  
That the great come home again  
With long dances danced in the garden  
Fiddle music and mirth among men,  
That Kilcash the home of our fathers  
Be lifted on high again  
And from that to the deluge of waters  
In bounty and peace remain.

*(From the Irish.)*

WILLIAM PLOMER

1903-

345

*The Scorpion*

**L**IMPOPO and Tugela churned  
In flood for brown and angry miles  
Melons, maize, domestic thatch,  
The trunks of trees and crocodiles;

The swollen estuaries were thick  
With flotsam, in the sun one saw  
The corpse of a young negress bruised  
By rocks, and rolling on the shore,

Pushed by the waves of morning, rolled  
Impersonally among shells,  
With lolling breasts and bleeding eyes,  
And round her neck were beads and bells.

That was the Africa we knew,  
Where, wandering alone,  
We saw, heraldic in the heat,  
A scorpion on a stone.

*A Levantine*

A MOUTH like old silk soft with use,  
The weak chin of a dying race,  
Eyes that know all and look at naught—  
Disease, depravity, disgrace  
Are all united in that face.

And yet the triumph of decay  
Outbraves the pride of bouncing fools—  
As an old craftsman smiles to hear  
His name respected in the schools  
And sees the rust upon his tools;

Through shades of truth and memory  
He burrows, secret as a mole,  
And smiles with loose and withered lips  
Because the workings of his soul  
Will, when he's low, stay sound and whole.

With Socrates as ancestor,  
And rich Byzantium in his veins,  
What if this weakling does not work?  
He never takes the slightest pains  
To exercise his drowsy brains,

But drinks his coffee, smokes and yawns  
While new-rich empires rise and fall:  
His blood is bluer than their heaven,  
Poor, but no poorer than them all,  
He has no principles at all.



CECIL DAY LEWIS

1905-

347

*Come up, Methuselah*

COME up, Methuselah,  
You doddering superman!  
Give me an instant realized  
And I'll outdo your span.

In that one moment of evening  
When roses are most red  
I can fold back the firmament,  
I can put time to bed.

Abraham, stint your tally  
Of concubines and cattle!  
Give place to me—capitalist  
In more intrinsic metal.

I have a lover of flesh  
And a lover that is a sprite:  
To-day I lie down with finite,  
To-morrow with infinite.

That one is a constant  
And suffers no eclipse,  
Though I feel sun and moon burning  
Together on her lips.

This one is a constant,  
But she's not kind at all;  
She raddles her gown with my despair  
And paints her lip with gall.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

My lover of flesh is wild,  
And willing to kiss again;  
She is the potency of earth  
When woods exhale the rain.

My lover of air, like Artemis  
Spectrally embraced,  
Shuns the daylight that twists her smile  
To mineral distaste.

Twin poles energetic, they  
Stand fast and generate  
This spark that crackles in the void  
As between fate and fate.

348      *Few Things can more inflame*

**F**EW things can more inflame  
This far too combative heart  
Than the intellectual Quixotes of the age  
Prattling of abstract art.

No one would deny it—  
But for a blind man's passion  
Cassandra had been no more than a drabble-skirt,  
Helen a ten-year fashion.  
Yet had there not been one hostess  
Ever whose arms waylaid  
Like the tough bramble a princeling's journey, or  
At the least no peasant maid  
Redressing with rude heat  
Nature's primeval wrong,  
Epic had slumbered on beneath his blindness  
And Helen lacked her song.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

(So the antique balloon  
Wobbles with no defence  
Against the void but a grapnel that hops and ploughs  
Through the landscape of sense.)

Phráse-making, dress-making—  
Distinction's hard to find;  
For thought must play the mannequin, strut in phrase,  
Or gape with the ruck: and mind,  
Like body, from covering gets  
Most adequate display.  
Yet time trundles this one to the rag-and-bone man,  
While that other may  
Reverberate all along  
Man's craggy circumstance—  
Naked enough to keep its dignity  
Though it eye God askance.

349

*Can the Mole take*

CAN the mole take  
A census of the stars?  
Our firmament will never  
Give him headache.

The man who nuzzles  
In a woman's lap  
Burrows toward a night  
Too deep for puzzles:

While he, whose prayer  
Holds up the starry system  
In a God's train, sees nothing  
Difficult there.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

So I, perhaps,  
Am neither mole nor mantis;  
I see the constellations,  
But by their gaps.

350

*With me my Lover makes*

WITH me, my lover makes  
The clock assert its chime:  
But when she goes, she takes  
The mainspring out of time.

Yet this time-wrecking charm  
Were better than love dead  
And its hollow alarum  
Hammered out on lead.

Why should I fear that Time  
Will superannuate  
These workmen of my rhyme—  
Love, despair and hate?

Fleeing the herd, I came  
To a graveyard on a hill,  
And felt its mould proclaim  
The bone gregarious still.

Boredoms and agonies  
Work out the rhythm of bone:—  
No peace till creature his  
Creator has outgrown.

Passion dies from the heart  
But to infect the marrow;  
Holds dream and act apart  
Till the man discard his narrow

CECIL DAY LEWIS

Sapience and folly  
Here, where the graves slumber  
In a green melancholy  
Of overblown summer.

351

*Rest from Loving*

REST from loving and be living.  
Fallen is fallen past retrieving  
The unique flyer dawn's dove  
Arrowing down feathered with fire.

Cease denying, begin knowing.  
Comes peace this way here comes renewing  
With dower of bird and bud knocks  
Loud on winter wall on death's door.

Here's no meaning but of morning.  
Naught soon of night but stars remaining,  
Sink lower, fade, as dark womb  
Recedes creation will step clear.

352

*Tempt me no more*

TEMPT me no more; for I  
Have known the lightning's hour,  
The poet's inward pride,  
The certainty of power.

Bayonets are closing round.  
I shrink; yet I must wring  
A living from despair  
And out of steel a song.

## CECIL DAY LEWIS

Though song, though breath be short,  
I'll share not the disgrace  
Of those that ran away  
Or never left the base.

Comrades, my tongue can speak  
No comfortable words,  
Calls to a forlorn hope,  
Gives work and not rewards.

Oh keep the sickle sharp  
And follow still the plough:  
Others may reap, though some  
See not the winter through.

Father, who endest all,  
Pity our broken sleep;  
For we lie down with tears  
And waken but to weep.

And if our blood alone  
Will melt this iron earth,  
Take it. It is well spent  
Easing a saviour's birth.

### 353 *I've heard them lilting at Loom and Belting*

I'VE heard them lilting at loom and belting,  
Lasses lilting before dawn of day:  
But now they are silent, not gamesome and gallant—  
The flowers of the town are rotting away.

There was laughter and loving in the lanes at evening;  
Handsome were the boys then, and girls were gay.  
But lost in Flanders by medalled commanders  
The lads of the village are vanished away.

## CECIL DAY LEWIS

Cursed be the promise that takes our men from us—  
All will be champion if you choose to obey:  
They fight against hunger but still it is stronger—  
The prime of our land grows cold as the clay.

The women are weary, once lilted so merry,  
Waiting to marry for a year and a day:  
From wooing and winning, from owning or earning  
The flowers of the town are all turned away.

### 354    *Come live with me and be my Love*

COME, live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
Of peace and plenty, bed and board,  
That chance employment may afford.

I'll handle dainties on the docks  
And thou shalt read of summer frocks:  
At evening by the sour canals  
We'll hope to hear some madrigals.

Care on thy maiden brow shall put  
A wreath of wrinkles, and thy foot  
Be shod with pain: not silken dress  
But toil shall tire thy loveliness.

Hunger shall make thy modest zone  
And cheat fond death of all but bone—  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.

WILLIAM EMPSON

1906-

355

*Arachne*

'T WIXT devil and deep sea, man hacks his caves;  
Birth, death; one, many; what is true, and seems;  
Earth's vast hot iron, cold space's empty waves:

King spider, walks the velvet roof of streams:  
Must bird and fish, must god and beast avoid:  
Dance, like nine angels, on pin-point extremes.

His gleaming bubble between void and void,  
Tribe-membrane, that by mutual tension stands,  
Earth's surface film, is at a breath destroyed.

Bubbles gleam brightest with least depth of lands  
But two is least can with full tension strain,  
Two molecules; one, and the film disbands.

We two suffice. But oh beware, whose vain  
Hydroptic soap my meagre water saves.  
Male spiders must not be too early slain.

MARGOT RUDDOCK

1907-

356

*The Child Compassion*

U NWELCOME child  
Compassion come  
Into my heart  
As to the womb,  
How heavily  
It laboureth  
In anguish to  
Bring thee to birth,



MARGOT RUDDOCK

O puny babe  
With thy frail cry  
Too weak to live  
Too strong to die.

Unwilling mother  
I confessed  
Do suckle thee  
Upon my breast.

357

*Spirit, Silken Thread*

SPIRIT, silken thread,  
S Lightly wind  
Through the fingers  
Of my soul  
She is blind. . . .

358

*Take Away*

TAKE away, take away, all that  
I have seen,  
Fold and wrap it away,  
Lock and bar away all that I know. . . .

For I cannot drink  
For the shrieking, blinding,  
Tearing wrench of thought—

Cannot drink from the pool  
That is waiting  
Waiting. . . .

Surging, sweetening, shaking,  
Lapping.

MARGOT RUDDOCK

359

*I take thee Life*

I TAKE thee, Life,  
Because I need,  
A wanton love  
My flesh to feed.

But still my soul  
Insatiate  
Cries out, cries out  
For its true mate.

360

*O Holy Water*

O HOLY water  
Love, I learn  
I may not take thee  
Though I burn.

O frustrate passion,  
Supple vine,  
I tear thy tendrils  
Waste thy wine.

O jagged path  
Reality  
I weep and bleed  
To follow thee.

361

*Love Song*

THOUGH to think  
Rejoiceth me,  
Love I will  
Not think of Thee,

MARGOT RUDDOCK

Though thy heart's  
My resting place  
Yet I will  
Not seek embrace,  
  
Not till soul  
Has shed her pain  
Will I come  
To Thee again.

And then when  
My heart is free  
I will give  
It back to Thee.

362

*Autumn, crystal Eye*

AUTUMN, crystal eye  
Look on me,  
Passion chilled am I  
Like to thee,

Seeking sterner truth,  
Even now  
Longing for the white  
Frozen bough.

LOUIS MACNEICE

363

*The Individualist speaks*

1907-

WE with our Fair pitched among the feathery clover  
Are always cowardly and never sober  
Drunk with steam-organs thigh-rub and cream-soda  
—We cannot remember enemies in this valley.

## LOUIS MACNEICE

As chestnut candles turn to conkers, so we  
Knock our brains together extravagantly  
Instead of planting them to make more trees  
—Who have not as yet sampled God's malice.

But to us urchins playing with paint and filth  
A prophet scanning the road on the hither hills  
Might utter the old warning of the old sin  
—Avening youth threatening an old war.

Crawling down like lava or termites  
Nothing seduces nothing dissolves nothing affrights  
You who scale off masks and smash the purple lights  
—But I will escape, with my dog, on the far side of the Fair.

364

### *Circe*

'... vitreamque Circe'

SOMETHING of glass about her, of dead water,  
Chills and holds us,  
Far more fatal than painted flesh or the lodestone of live hair  
This despair of crystal brilliance.  
Narcissus' error  
Enfolds and kills us—  
Dazed with gazing on that unfertile beauty  
Which is our own heart's thought.  
Fled away to the beasts  
One cannot stop thinking; Timon  
Kept on finding gold.  
In parrot-ridden forest or barren coast  
A more importunate voice than bird or wave  
Escutcheoned on the air with ice letters  
Seeks and, of course, finds us  
(Of course, being our echo).

LOUIS MacNEICE

Be brave, my ego, look into your glass  
And realize that that never-to-be-touched  
Vision is your mistress.

365

*Turf-stacks*

**A**MONG these turf-stacks graze no iron horses  
Such as stalk, such as champ in towns and the soul of  
crowds,

Here is no mass-production of neat thoughts  
No canvas shrouds for the mind nor any black hearses:  
The peasant shambles on his boots like hooves  
Without thinking at all or wanting to run in grooves.

But those who lack the peasant's conspirators,  
The tawny mountain, the unregarded buttress,  
Will feel the need of a fortress against ideas and against the  
Shuddering insidious shock of the theory-vendors,  
The little sardine men crammed in a monster toy  
Who tilt their aggregate beast against our crumbling Troy.

For we are obsolete who like the lesser things  
Who play in corners with looking-glasses and beads;  
It is better we should go quickly, go into Asia  
Or any other tunnel where the world recedes,  
Or turn blind wantons like the gulls who scream  
And rip the edge off any ideal or dream.

366

*An Eclogue for Christmas*

A. I meet you in an evil time.

B. The evil bells

Put out of our heads, I think, the thought of everything  
else.

LOUIS MACNEICE

- A. It is time for some new coinage, people have got so old,  
Hacked and handled and shiny from pocketing they have  
made bold  
To think that each is himself through these accidents,  
being blind  
To the fact that they are merely the counters of an un-  
known Mind.
- B. A Mind that does not think, if such a thing can be,  
Mechanical Reason, capricious Identity.  
That I could be able to face this domination nor flinch—
- A. The tin toys of the hawker move on the pavement inch by  
inch  
Not knowing that they are wound up; it is better to be so  
Than to be, like us, wound up and while running down to  
know—
- B. But everywhere the pretence of individuality recurs—
- A. Old faces frosted with powder and choked in furs.
- B. The jutlipped farmer gazing over the humpbacked wall.
- A. The commercial traveller joking in the urinal,
- B. I think things draw to an end, the soil is stale.
- A. And over-elaboration will nothing now avail,  
The street is up again, gas, electricity or drains,  
Ever-changing conveniences, nothing comfortable remains  
Un-improved, as flagging Rome improved villa and sewer  
(A sound-proof library and a stable temperature).  
Our street is up, red lights sullenly mark  
The long trench of pipes, iron guts in the dark,  
And not till the Goths again come swarming down the  
hill  
Will cease the clangour of the electric drill.  
But yet there is beauty narcotic and deciduous  
In this vast organism grown out of us:

## LOUIS MacNEICE

On all the traffic-islands stand white globes like moons,  
The city's haze is clouded amber that purrs and croons,  
And tilting by the noble curve bus after tall bus comes  
With an osculation of yellow light, with a glory like  
chrysanthemums.

- B. The country gentry cannot change, they will die in their shoes

From angry circumstance and moral self-abuse,  
Dying with a paltry fizzle they will prove their lives to be  
An ever-diluted drug, a spiritual tautology.  
They cannot live once their idols are turned out,  
None of them can endure, for how could they, possibly,  
without

The flotsam of private property, pekingese and polyanthus,  
The good things which in the end turn to poison and pus,  
Without the bandy chairs and the sugar in the silver tongs  
And the inter-ripple and resonance of years of dinner-  
gongs?

Or if they could find no more that cumulative proof  
In the rain dripping off the conservatory roof?  
What will happen when the only sanction the country-  
dweller has—

- A. What will happen to us, planked and panelled with jazz?  
Who go to the theatre where a black man dances like an  
eel,  
Where pink thighs flash like the spokes of a wheel, where  
we feel  
That we know in advance all the jogtrot and the cake-  
walk jokes,  
All the bumfun and the gags of the comedians in boaters  
and toques,  
All the tricks of the virtuosos who invert the usual—

## LOUIS MACNEICE

- B. What will happen to us when the State takes down the  
manor wall,  
When there is no more private shooting or fishing, when  
the trees are all cut down,  
When faces are all dials and cannot smile or frown—
- A. What will happen when the sniggering machine-guns in  
the hands of the young men  
Are trained on every flat and club and beauty parlour and  
Father's den?  
What will happen when our civilization like a long pent  
balloon—
- B. What will happen will happen; the whore and the buffoon  
Will come off best; no dreamers, they cannot lose their  
dream  
And are at least likely to be reinstated in the new régime.  
But one thing is not likely—
- A. Do not gloat over yourself  
Do not be your own vulture, high on some mountain shelf  
Huddle the pitiless abstractions bald about the neck  
Who will descend when you crumple in the plains a wreck.  
Over the randy of the theatre and cinema I hear songs  
Unlike anything—
- B. The lady of the house poises the silver tongs  
And picks a lump of sugar, 'ne plus ultra' she says  
'I cannot do otherwise, even to prolong my days'—
- A. I cannot do otherwise either, to-night I will book my seat—
- B. I will walk about the farm-yard which is replete  
As with the smell of dung so with memories—
- A. I will gorge myself to satiety with the oddities  
Of every artiste, official or amateur,  
Who has pleased me in my rôle of hero-worshipper  
Who has pleased me in my rôle of individual man—



LOUIS MACNEICE

- B. Let us lie once more, say 'What we think, we can'  
The old idealist lie—
- A. And for me before I die  
Let me go the round of the garish glare—
- B. And on the bare and high  
Places of England, the Wiltshire Downs and the Long  
Mynd  
Let the balls of my feet bounce on the turf, my face burn  
in the wind  
My eyelashes stinging in the wind, and the sheep like  
grey stones  
Humble my human pretensions—
- A. Let the saxophones and the xylophones  
And the cult of every technical excellence, the miles of  
canvas in the galleries  
And the canvas of the rich man's yacht snapping and  
tacking on the seas  
And the perfection of a grilled steak—
- B. Let all these so ephemeral things  
Be somehow permanent like the swallow's tangent wings:  
Goodbye to you, this day remember is Christmas, this morn  
They say, interpret it your own way, Christ is born.

WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN

1907-

367 *It's no use raising a Shout*

IT'S no use raising a shout.  
No, Honey, you can cut that right out.  
I don't want any more hugs;  
Make me some fresh tea, fetch me some rugs.  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

## WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN

A long time ago I told my mother  
I was leaving home to find another:  
I never answered her letter  
But I never found a better.  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

It wasn't always like this?  
Perhaps it wasn't, but it is.  
Put the car away; when life fails,  
What's the good of going to Wales?  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

In my spine there was a base;  
And I knew the general's face:  
But they've severed all the wires,  
And I can't tell what the general desires.  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

In my veins there is a wish,  
And a memory of fish:  
When I lie crying on the floor,  
It says, 'You've often done this before.'  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

A bird used to visit this shore:  
It isn't going to come any more.  
I've come a very long way to prove  
No land, no water, and no love.  
Here am I, here are you:  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?

WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN

368

**T**HIS lunar beauty  
Has no history  
Is complete and early;  
If beauty later  
Bear any feature  
It had a lover  
And is another.

This like a dream  
Keeps other time  
And daytime is  
The loss of this;  
For time is inches  
And the heart's changes  
Where ghost has haunted  
Lost and wanted.

But this was never  
A ghost's endeavour  
Nor finished this,  
Was ghost at ease;  
And till it pass  
Love shall not near  
The sweetness here  
Nor sorrow take  
His endless look.

368a

**B**EFORE this loved one  
Was that one and that one  
A family  
And history  
And ghost's adversity

## WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN

Whose pleasing name  
Was neighbourly shame.  
Before this last one  
Was much to be done,  
Frontiers to cross  
As clothes grew worse  
And coins to pass  
In a cheaper house  
Before this last one  
Before this loved one.

Face that the sun  
Is supple on  
May stir but here  
Is no new year;  
This gratitude for gifts is less  
Than the old loss;  
Touching is shaking hands  
On mortgaged lands;  
And smiling of  
This gracious greeting  
'Good day. Good luck'  
Is no real meeting  
But instinctive look  
A backward love.

369

### *The Silly Fool*

THE silly fool, the silly fool  
Was sillier in school  
But beat the bully as a rule.

## WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN

The youngest son, the youngest son  
Was certainly no wise one  
Yet could surprise one.

Or rather, or rather  
To be posh, we gather,  
One should have no father.

Simple to prove  
That deeds indeed  
In life succeed  
But love in love  
And tales in tales  
Where no one fails.

## JULIAN BELL

1908-

370

### *The Redshanks*

**D**RIVE on, sharp wings, and cry above  
Not contemplating life or love  
Or war or death: a winter flight  
Impartial to our human plight.

I below shall still remain  
On solid earth, with fear and pain,  
Doubt, and act, and nervous strive,  
As best I may, to keep alive.

What useless dream, a hope to sail  
Down the wide, transparent gale,  
Until, insentient, I shall be  
As gaseous a transparency.

## JULIAN BELL

What useless dream, a hope to wring  
Comfort from a migrant wing:  
Human or beast, before us set  
The incommunicable net.

Parallel, yet separate,  
The languages we mistranslate,  
And knowledge seems no less absurd  
If of a mistress, or a bird.

## STEPHEN SPENDER

1909—

371

### *The Shapes of Death*

SHAPES of death haunt life,  
Neurosis eclipsing each in special shadow:  
Unrequited love not solving  
One's need to become another's body  
Wears black invisibility:  
The greed for property  
Heaps a skyscraper over the breathing ribs:  
The speedlines of dictators  
Cut their own stalks:  
From afar, we watch the best of us—  
Whose adored desire was to die for the world.

Ambition is my death. That flat thin flame  
I feed, that plants my shadow. This prevents love  
And offers love of being loved or loving.  
The humorous self-forgetful drunkenness  
It hates, demands the slavish pyramids

## STEPHEN SPENDER

Be built. Who can prevent  
His death's industry, which when he sleeps  
Throws up its towers? And conceals in slackness  
The dreams of revolution, the birth of death?

Also the swallows by autumnal instinct  
Comfort us with their effortless exhaustion  
In great unguided flight to their complete South.  
There on my fancied pyramids they lodge  
But for delight, their whole compulsion.  
Not teaching me to love, but soothing my eyes;  
Not saving me from death, but saving me for speech.

### 372      *An 'I' can never be Great Man*

**A**N 'I' can never be great man.  
This known great one has weakness  
To friends is most remarkable for weakness  
His ill-temper at meals, his dislike of being contradicted,  
His only real pleasure fishing in ponds,  
His only real desire—forgetting.

To advance from friends to the composite self  
Central 'I' is surrounded by 'I eating',  
'I loving', 'I angry', 'I excreting',  
And the 'great I' planted in him  
Has nothing to do with all these.

It can never claim its true place  
Resting in the forehead, and secure in his gaze.  
The 'great I' is an unfortunate intruder  
Quarrelling with 'I tiring' and 'I sleeping'  
And all those other 'I's who long for 'We dying'.

373

*The Times*

TIME wasted and time spent  
Daytime with used up wit  
Time to stand, time to sit  
Or wait and see if it  
Happens, happy event

For war is eating now.

Waking, shaking off death  
Leaving the white sheets  
And dull-head who repeats  
The dream of his defeats  
And drawing colder breath

For war is eating now.

Growing older, going  
Where the water runs  
Black as death, and guns  
Explode the sinking suns,  
Blowing like hell, snowing

For war is eating now.

374

*Solar Creation*

THE sun, of whose terrain we creatures are,  
Is the director of all human love,  
Unit of time, and circle round the earth,



## CHARLES MADGE

And we are the commotion born of love  
And slanted rays of that illustrious star,  
Peregrine of the crowded fields of birth,  
The crowded lane, the market and the tower.  
Like sight in pictures, real at remove,  
Such is our motion on dimensional earth.  
Down by the river, where the ragged are,  
Continuous the cries and noise of birth,  
While to the muddy edge dark fishes move,  
And over all, like death, or sloping hill,  
Is nature, which is larger and more still.

## GEORGE BARKER

1913-

375

### *The Wraith-friend*

FOLLOWING forbidden streets  
Towards unreal retreats,  
Returning, lost again,  
Encircling in vain:  
No lunar eye, no star  
Beckoning from the far  
Wastes the trackless feet  
Leading their beaten beat  
Back on to the broad  
And multitudinous road.  
In what unearthly land  
I fugitively stand,  
Between what frenzied seas  
Gaze, with my burning miseries  
Miming the stars?

373

*The Times*

TIME wasted and time spent  
Daytime with used up wit  
Time to stand, time to sit  
Or wait and see if it  
Happens, happy event

For war is eating now.

Waking, shaking off death  
Leaving the white sheets  
And dull-head who repeats  
The dream of his defeats  
And drawing colder breath

For war is eating now.

Growing older, going  
Where the water runs  
Black as death, and guns  
Explode the sinking suns,  
Blowing like hell, snowing

For war is eating now.

374

*Solar Creation*

THE sun, of whose terrain we creatures are,  
Is the director of all human love,  
Unit of time, and circle round the earth,

## CHARLES MADGE

And we are the commotion born of love  
And slanted rays of that illustrious star,  
Peregrine of the crowded fields of birth,  
  
The crowded lane, the market and the tower.  
Like sight in pictures, real at remove,  
Such is our motion on dimensional earth.  
  
Down by the river, where the ragged are,  
Continuous the cries and noise of birth,  
While to the muddy edge dark fishes move,  
  
And over all, like death, or sloping hill,  
Is nature, which is larger and more still.

## GEORGE BARKER

1913-

375

### *The Wraith-friend*

FOLLOWING forbidden streets  
Towards unreal retreats,  
Returning, lost again,  
Encircling in vain:  
No lunar eye, no star  
Beckoning from the far  
Wastes the trackless feet  
Leading their beaten beat  
Back on to the broad  
And multitudinous road.  
In what unearthly land  
I fugitively stand,  
Between what frenzied seas  
Gaze, with my burning miseries  
Miming the stars?

■

## GEORGE BARKER

O angel in me hidden  
Rise from the laden  
Sorrow of this dark hand !  
Companion and wraith-friend  
From the rib's narrow prison  
Step, in miraculous person !  
Touch into these exhausted limbs  
The alacrity of the birds  
Which over the greatest ranges  
Widely and eagerly range !

Though to wings those dark limbs  
Spread, and that deep breast climbs  
Eagerly the heights of the skies, or  
Of the earliest lark's soar,  
Until brushing against cold heaven  
Like bluebirds in storms, even  
Then that known flesh must fall.  
Soon, within this prison's wider wall  
Lie with those giant arms, that form,  
For there is no upward egress from  
This earthly, this unearthly land  
Upon whose dust may stand  
None, though heavenly high can fly,  
But in whose dust all brighter dust must lie.

376

### *The leaping Laughers*

WHEN will men again  
Lift irresistible fists  
Not bend from ends  
But each man lift men  
Nearer again.

## GEORGE BARKER

Many men mean  
Well: but tall walls  
Impede, their hands bleed and  
They fall, their seed the  
Seed of the fallen.

See here the fallen  
Stooping over stones, over their  
Own bones: but all  
Stooping doom beaten.

Whom the noonday washes  
Whole, whom the heavens compel,  
And to whom pass immaculate messages,  
When will men again  
Lift irresistible fists  
Impede impediments  
Leap mountains laugh at walls?

377

### *The Crystal*

WITH burning fervour  
I am forever  
Turning in my hand  
The crystal, this moment  
  
Whose spatial glitter  
Travelling erratically  
Forward  
  
Touches with permanent  
Disturbance the pavements  
The faked walls the crevices  
Of futurity.

GEORGE BARKER

Sooner than darken  
This crystal miracle  
With a hand's  
Vagary

One would dis sever  
This wrist this hand,  
Or remove the eyelid  
To see the end.

378

*He comes among*

**H**E comes among  
The summer throngs of the young  
Rose, and in his long  
Hands flowers, fingers, carries;  
Dreamed of like aviaries  
In which many phoenixes sing,  
Promising touch soon  
In summer, never to come:  
  
Or, the scarce falls  
Of unearthly streams, calls  
And recalls the call,  
Tempting in echoes the aspatial  
Glooms of the empty  
Heart, till the senses, need inebriate,  
Turning and burning through slow leaves of vag  
Urge, shall, until age.

# INDEX OF AUTHORS

References are to the numbers of the poems

- Abercrombie, Lascelles, 193-6.  
 Æ (George William Russell) 100-7.  
 Auden, Wystan Hugh, 367-9.  
 Barker, George, 375-8.  
 Bell, Julian, 370.  
 Belloc, Hilaire, 115.  
 Binyon, Laurence, 114.  
 Blunden, Edmund, 307-12.  
 Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, 2-7.  
 Bottomley, Gordon, 149.  
 Boyd, Thomas, 99.  
 Bradley, Katharine, *see* Field, Michael.  
 Bridges, Robert, 12-17.  
 Brooke, Rupert, 246.  
 Campbell, Joseph, 183.  
 Campbell, Roy, 332-5.  
 Chesterton, Gilbert Keith, 150-1.  
 Church, Richard, 293.  
 Coleridge, Mary Elizabeth, 52.  
 Colum, Padraic, 198-201.  
 Cooper, Edith, *see* Field, Michael.  
 Coppard, Alfred Edgar, 152-4.  
 Cornford, Frances, 238-41.  
 Davies, William Henry, 116-22.  
 Davison, Edward, 323.  
 De La Mare, Walter, 143-8.  
 Dowson, Ernest, 90-8.  
 Drinkwater, John, 202-3.  
 Eliot, Thomas Stearns, 253-9.  
 Ellis, Edwin John, 29.  
 Empson, William, 355.  
 Field, Michael (Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper), 61-9.  
 Flecker, James Elroy, 218-20.  
 Freeman, John, 190-2.  
 Ghose, Manmohan, 123.  
 Gibson, Wilfrid, 155-8.  
 Gogarty, Oliver St. John, 159-75.  
 Gregory, Augusta (Lady Gregory), 35-9.  
 Grenfell, Julian, 260.  
 Hardy, Thomas, 8-11.  
 Henley, William Ernest, 25-8.  
 Higgins, Frederick Robert, 313-18.  
 Hodgson, Ralph, 142.  
 Hopkins, Gerard Manley, 18-24.  
 Housman, Alfred Edward, 42-6.  
 Hughes, Richard, 324-31.  
 Johnson, Lionel, 108-13.  
 Joyce, James, 204-6.  
 Kipling, Rudyard, 70-1.  
 Lawrence, David Herbert, 228-33.  
 Lewis, Cecil Day, 347-54.  
 M'Diarmid, Hugh, 281-4.  
 McGreevy, Thomas, 294-5.  
 MacNeice, Louis, 363-6.  
 Madge, Charles, 373-4.  
 Masfield, John, 176-81.  
 Mathers, Edward Powys, 285.  
 Meynell, Alice, 32-4.  
 Monro, Harold, 184-9.  
 Moore, Thomas Sturge, 124-9.  
 Newbolt, Sir Henry, 60.  
 Nichols, Robert, 296-304.  
 O'Connor, Frank, 338-44.  
 Pater, Walter, 1.  
 Pinto, Vivian de Sola, 286.

## INDEX OF AUTHORS

- Plomer, William, 345-6.  
 Pound, Ezra, 234-6.  
 Powell, Frederick York, 30-1.  
 Read, Herbert, 305.  
 Rhys, Ernest Percival, 47-8.  
 Roberts, Michael, 336-7.  
 Rolleston, Thomas William Hazen  
     41.  
 Ruddock, Margot, 356-62.  
 Russell, George William (Æ),  
     100-7.  
 Sackville-West, Victoria, 287-8.  
 Sassoon, Siegfried, 242-5.  
 Scott, Geoffrey, 221-4.  
 Shanks, Edward, 289-92.  
 Sitwell, Edith, 247-52.  
 Sitwell, Sacheverell, 322.  
 Spender, Stephen, 371-2.  
 Squire, Sir John Collings, 225.  
 Stead, William Force, 226-7.  
 Stephens, James, 207-14.  
 Strong, Leonard Alfred George,  
     319-21.  
 Sturm, Frank Pearce, 197.  
 Swami, Shri Purohit, 215-17.  
 Symons, Arthur, 72-4.  
 Synge, John Millington, 130-41.  
 Tagore, Sir Rabindranath, 53-9.  
 Thomas, Edward, 182.  
 Thompson, Francis, 49-51.  
 Trench, Herbert, 75.  
 Turner, Walter James, 261-72.  
 Waley, Arthur, 237.  
 Warner, Sylvia Townsend, 306.  
 Wellesley, Dorothy, 273-80.  
 Wilde, Oscar, 40.  
 Yeats, William Butler, 76-89.



# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

References are to pages

A birdless heaven, seadusk, one lone star . . . . .	217
A candle lit in darkness of black waters . . . . .	328
A cold coming we had of it . . . . .	288
A golden cradle under you, and you young . . . . .	34
A head I bear;—the Eagle of Gál . . . . .	52
A house ringed round with trees and in the trees . . . . .	200
A jar of cider and my pipe . . . . .	132
A miracle indeed! Thou art Lord of All Power . . . . .	224
A mouth like old silk soft with use . . . . .	408
A poor lad once and a lad so trim . . . . .	78
A storm-beaten old watch-tower. . . . .	81
A voice on the winds . . . . .	108
After hot loveless nights, when cold winds stream . . . . .	394
Ah me, if I grew sweet to man . . . . .	68
Ah, see the fair chivalry come, the companions of Christ . . . . .	108
All in a garden green . . . . .	26
All that I had I brought . . . . .	94
All we make is enough Barely to seem . . . . .	230
Among these turf-stacks graze no iron horses. . . . .	421
An 'I' can never be great man . . . . .	433
And twice a day he smoked his pipe . . . . .	41
Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees . . . . .	283
As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage . . . . .	19
As over muddy shores a dragon flock . . . . .	203
Ass-face drank the asses' milk of the stars . . . . .	274
At Golgotha I stood alone. . . . .	27
At Quincey's moat the squandering village ends . . . . .	364
At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows . . . . .	215
Auld Noah was at hame wi' them a' . . . . .	324
Autumn, crystal eye Look on me . . . . .	419
Autumn: the ninth year of Yüan Ho . . . . .	247
Barabbas, Judas Iscariot . . . . .	323
Be kind to her O Time . . . . .	201
Brat the knife on the plate and the fork on the can . . . . .	332
Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come . . . . .	16
Before I woke I knew her gone . . . . .	341
Before the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode . . . . .	163
Before this loved one was that one and that one . . . . .	429
Reloved, may your sleep be sound . . . . .	81

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Beneath a thundery glaze . . . . .	304
Bury her at even . . . . .	69
But for your Terror Where would be Valour?	185
But lo! at length the day is lingered out . . . . .	60
But piteous things we are—when I am gone . . . . .	340
Call not thy wanderer home as yet . . . . .	103
Calm, calm the moving waters all the night . . . . .	122
Can the lover share his soul . . . . .	292
Can the mole take A census of the stars . . . . .	411
Clouded with snow, The cold winds blow . . . . .	158
Cold, sharp lamentation . . . . .	33
Come, dark-eyed Sleep, thou child of Night . . . . .	70
Come, let us sigh a requiem over love . . . . .	340
Come, live with me and be my love . . . . .	415
Come up, Methuselah . . . . .	409
Could man be drunk for ever . . . . .	48
Dark Angel, with thine aching lust . . . . .	105
Darkness comes out of the earth . . . . .	238
Day after day, O lord of my life . . . . .	63
Dervorgilla's supremely lovely daughter . . . . .	174
Dian, Isis, Artemis whate'er thy name . . . . .	301
Dim the light in your faces: be passionless in the room . . . . .	391
Do not let any woman read this verse . . . . .	218
Do you remember an Inn . . . . .	127
Down the blue night the unending columns press . . . . .	260
Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away . . . . .	67
Dread are the death-pale Kings . . . . .	211
Drive on, sharp wings, and cry above . . . . .	431
Elected Silence, sing to me . . . . .	17
Endure what life God gives and ask no longer span . . . . .	90
Enough! Why should a man bemoan . . . . .	178
Every branch big with it . . . . .	7
Exceeding sorrow consumeth my sad heart . . . . .	94
Exquisite stillness! What serenities . . . . .	343
Far off a lonely hound . . . . .	202
Few things can more inflame . . . . .	410
Following forbidden streets . . . . .	435
For oak and elm have pleasant leaves . . . . .	39
Frail the white rose and frail are . . . . .	217
Friend of Ronsard, Nashe and Beaumont . . . . .	146

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Girls scream, Boys shout . . . . .	133
Glory be to God for dappled things . . . . .	18
God rest that Jewy woman . . . . .	372
Gone are the coloured princes, gone echo, gone laughter . . . . .	392
Goneys an' gullies an' all o' the birds o' the sea . . . . .	186
Green-eyed Care . . . . .	389
Greyer than the tide below, the tower . . . . .	335
Hard is the stone, but harder still . . . . .	183
He comes among The summer throngs of the young . . . . .	438
He did not wear his scarlet coat . . . . .	37
He is not dead nor liveth . . . . .	322
He who has once been happy is for aye . . . . .	2
Hector, the captain bronzed, from simple fight . . . . .	229
Here in a distant place I hold my tongue . . . . .	220
Here in this great house in the barrack square . . . . .	263
Here the hills are earth's bones . . . . .	317
Here they went with smock and crook . . . . .	362
His last days linger in that low attic . . . . .	369
His naked skin clothed in the torrid mist . . . . .	393
His soul stretched tight across the skies . . . . .	280
Ho, all you cats in all the street . . . . .	194
Honoured I lived e'erwhile with honoured men . . . . .	3
How far is St. Helena from a little child at play? . . . . .	73
How often does a man need to see a woman . . . . .	305
How to kéep—is there ány any, is there none such, nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, láce, latch or catch or key to keep . . . . .	21
I always see—I don't know why—— . . . . .	375
I am a sea-shell flung Up from the ancient sea . . . . .	231
I am Ireland . . . . .	35
I am sitting here Since the moon rose in the night . . . . .	214
I am thy fugitive, thy votary . . . . .	72
I asked if I got sick and died, would you . . . . .	146
I begin through the grass once again to be bound to the Lord . . . . .	99
I closed my eyes to-day and saw . . . . .	234
I could wish to be dead! . . . . .	69
I fled Him, down the nights and down the days . . . . .	54
I had watched the ascension and decline of the Moon . . . . .	298
I have a young love—— . . . . .	360
I have been young, and now am not too old . . . . .	367
I have got my leave . . . . .	64
I've heard them lilting at loom and belting . . . . .	414

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

I have thrown wide my window . . . . .	397
I have seen mannequins . . . . .	302
I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep . . . . .	226
I've thirty months, and that's my pride . . . . .	147
I heard a bird at dawn . . . . .	221
I heard a linnnet courting . . . . .	15
I heard in the night the pigeons . . . . .	215
I know that I am a great sinner . . . . .	223
I know that I shall meet my fate . . . . .	87
I look at the swaling sunset . . . . .	240
I love not thy perfections. When I hear . . . . .	3
I love to see, when leaves depart . . . . .	395
I meditate upon a swallow's flight . . . . .	88
I meet you in an evil time . . . . .	421
I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong . . . . .	33
I saw the bodies of earth's men . . . . .	296
I shall come back to die . . . . .	384
I shall go among red faces and virile voices . . . . .	325
I speak not from my pallid lips . . . . .	350
I sweep the street and lift me hat . . . . .	374
I take thee, Life, Because I need . . . . .	418
I talked one midnight with the jolly ghost . . . . .	26
I that lived ever about you . . . . .	326
I, the old woman of Beare . . . . .	398
I thought the night without a sound was falling . . . . .	233
I turned and gave my strength to woman . . . . .	374
I wake: I am alive: there is a bell . . . . .	354
I wander through a crowd of women . . . . .	327
I want nothing but your fire-side now . . . . .	195
I will go with the first air of morning . . . . .	318
I will live in Ringsend . . . . .	175
I would not alter thy cold eyes . . . . .	93
Ich sterbe . . . Life ebbs with an easy flow . . . . .	345
If God kept a terrarium . . . . .	299
If I should ever by chance grow rich . . . . .	192
If I were stone dead and buried under . . . . .	388
If it is not my portion . . . . .	63
If medals were ordained for drinks . . . . .	185
I'll go, said I, to the woods and hills . . . . .	170
Imageries of dreams reveal a gracious age . . . . .	107
In a quiet water'd land, a land of roses . . . . .	45
In Debtors' Yard the stones are hard . . . . .	41
In despair at not being able to rival the creations of God . . . . .	307
In graves where drips the winter rain . . . . .	50

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

In the dusky path of a dream . . . . .	66
In the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish Seas . . . . .	189
In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round the land . . . . .	8
In the years of her age the most beautiful . . . . .	148
In Time like glass the stars are set . . . . .	295
Is it not strange that men can die . . . . .	298
Is there anybody there? said the Traveller . . . . .	157
Is there anything as I can do ashore for you . . . . .	188
Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose . . . . .	100
It's a sunny pleasant anchorage, is Kingdom Come . . . . .	187
It's no use raising a shout . . . . .	427
 John Fane Dingle By Rumney Brook . . . . .	 389
Juan de Juni the priest said . . . . .	333
 Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine . . . . .	 92
Let there be life, said God. And what He wrought . . . . .	259
Like gript stick Still I sit . . . . .	387
Like silver dew are the tears of love . . . . .	171
Limpopo and Tugela churned . . . . .	407
Long since I'd ceased to care . . . . .	173
Long time in some forgotten churchyard earth of Warwickshire . . . . .	216
Loudens the sea-wind, downward plunge the bows . . . . .	336
 Make way, make way, You thwarting stones . . . . .	 204
Mother of God! no lady thou . . . . .	62
Must we part, Von Hügel . . . . .	82
My flowery and green age was passing away . . . . .	148
My love lies underground . . . . .	236
My thoughts, my grief! are without strength . . . . .	36
My walls outside must have some flowers . . . . .	129
 No more the English girls may go . . . . .	 332
Nothing is so beautiful as spring . . . . .	19
Now all the truth is out . . . . .	86
Now every thing that shadowy thought . . . . .	362
Now, Joy is born of parents poor . . . . .	128
Now may we turn aside and dry our tears . . . . .	221
Now shall I walk . . . . .	132
 O boys, the times I've seen! . . . . .	 181
O cruel Death, give three things back . . . . .	80
O grasses wet with dew, yellow fallen leaves . . . . .	256
O Holy water Love, I learn . . . . .	418

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

O nothing, in this corporal earth of man . . . . .	61
O silver-throated Swan . . . . .	134
O soul, canst thou not understand . . . . .	72
O stiffly shapen houses that change not . . . . .	239
O Tristram, is this true? . . . . .	115
O wha's been here afore me, lass . . . . .	324
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves . . . . .	257
O words are lightly spoken . . . . .	84
Of the beauty of kindness I speak . . . . .	135
Oh Menelaus, Oh my poor friend . . . . .	333
Old Barbarossa Sleeps not alone . . . . .	330
On ear and ear two noises too old to end . . . . .	20
On the slope of the desolate river . . . . .	64
One fantee wave is grave and tall . . . . .	275
Only last week, walking the hushed fields . . . . .	369
Only the Lion and the Cock . . . . .	179
Our friends go with us as we go . . . . .	181
Out of the night that covers me . . . . .	25
Over their edge of earth . . . . .	368
Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee . . . . .	12
Proconsul of Bithynia . . . . .	182
'Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go!' one says, says he . . . . .	9
Queen Bess was Harry's daughter . . . . .	74
Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir . . . . .	189
Red granite and black diorite, with the blue . . . . .	325
Rest from loving and be living . . . . .	413
Rock-like the souls of men . . . . .	296
Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind . . . . .	107
Said God, 'You sisters, ere ye go' . . . . .	203
Sailorman I'll give to you . . . . .	161
Scaramouche waves a threatening hand . . . . .	76
See an old unhappy bull . . . . .	150
Seven dog-days we let pass . . . . .	144
Shall I do this? Shall I do that? . . . . .	224
Shaped and vacated . . . . .	138
Shapes of death haunt life . . . . .	432
She is older than the rocks among which she sits . . . . .	1
She lives in the porter's room; the plush is nicotined . . . . .	196
She that but little patience knew . . . . .	84
Since the Conquest none of us . . . . .	177

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Since those we love and those we hate . . . . .	26
Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard . . . . .	38
Snow wind-whipt to ice . . . . .	392
So I came down the steps to Lenin . . . . .	320
So that the vines burst from my fingers . . . . .	243
Soldier from the wars returning . . . . .	46
Sombre and rich, the skies . . . . .	109
Something of glass about her, of dead water . . . . .	420
Speech after long silence; it is right . . . . .	80
Spirit, silken thread Lightly wind . . . . .	417
Spirits walking everywhere . . . . .	302
Still south I went and west and south again . . . . .	147
Strange grows the river on the sunless evenings . . . . .	95
Take away, take away, all that . . . . .	417
Tall unpopular men . . . . .	185
Tell him the tale is a lie! . . . . .	402
Tempt me no more; for I . . . . .	413
That is no country for old men . . . . .	82
That is the last time I shall call upon that Ancient Mariner . . . . .	299
That my old mournful heart was pierced in this black doom . . . . .	405
That night the empty corridors . . . . .	43
The beautiful, delicate bright gazelle . . . . .	294
The blue laguna rocks and quivers . . . . .	190
The broad-backed hippopotamus . . . . .	280
The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers . . . . .	47
The cow eats green grass . . . . .	136
The delicate white body will be buried to-day . . . . .	53
The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven . . . . .	290
The fat men go about the streets . . . . .	232
The fire is out, and spent the warmth thereof . . . . .	96
The first day she passed up and down . . . . .	149
The great blue ceremony of the air . . . . .	205
The great stone hearth has gone . . . . .	309
The greater cats with golden eyes . . . . .	327
The heart you hold too small and local thing . . . . .	61
The Lady Poverty was fair . . . . .	32
The lanky hank of a she in the inn over there . . . . .	220
The light of evening, Lissadell . . . . .	85
The long-rolling, Steady-pouring, Deep-trenched Green billow . . . . .	223
The man I had a love for . . . . .	149
The moon behind high tranquil leaves . . . . .	341
The Moon has gone to her rest . . . . .	4
The morning comes to consciousness . . . . .	279

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

The naked earth is warm with spring . . . . .	291
The pang of the long century of rains . . . . .	269
The pretty maid she died, she died, in love-bed as she lay . . . . .	31
The Queen she sent to look for me . . . . .	46
The silly fool, the silly fool . . . . .	430
The singers of serenades . . . . .	76
The spiritual, the carnal, are one. . . . .	321
The storm is over, the land hushes to rest . . . . .	13
The student's life is pleasant . . . . .	404
The sun, of whose terrain we creatures are . . . . .	434
The tall dancer dances . . . . .	192
The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and tore . . . . .	9
The vixen woman, Long gone away . . . . .	200
The winter evening settles down . . . . .	278
The withered leaves that drift in Russell Square . . . . .	331
The World is all orange-round . . . . .	390
The yellow bird sings . . . . .	65
The young girl dancing lifts her face . . . . .	295
There always is a noise when it is dark . . . . .	222
There be three things seeking my death . . . . .	403
There is no chapel on the day . . . . .	43
There is no point in work . . . . .	235
There's snow in every street . . . . .	147
There was a queen that fell in love with a jolly sailor bold . . . . .	30
These market-dames, mid-aged, with lips thin-drawn . . . . .	9
They bring me gifts, they honour me . . . . .	71
They shall sink under water . . . . .	102
They've paid the last respects in sad tobacco . . . . .	370
Thine elder that I am, thou must not cling . . . . .	71
This endless gray-roofed city, and each heart . . . . .	257
This is the weather the cuckoo likes . . . . .	7
This lunar beauty Has no history . . . . .	429
Those moon-gilded dancers . . . . .	101
Thou art the sky . . . . .	67
Thou art the Way . . . . .	32
Though to think Rejoiceth me . . . . .	418
Though to your life apparent stain attach . . . . .	339
Thrush, linnet, stare and wren . . . . .	146
Thus spoke the lady underneath the trees . . . . .	270
Time flits away, time flits away, lady . . . . .	137
Time wasted and time spent . . . . .	434
'Tis not by brooding on delight . . . . .	176
To Meath of the pastures . . . . .	212
To-day's house makes to-morrow's road . . . . .	366



## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Tomb A hollow hateful word . . . . .	375
Towery city and branchy between towers . . . . .	21
Tristram lies sick to death . . . . .	111
Truth is love and love is truth . . . . .	169
Twenty years are gone . . . . .	183
'Twixt Carrowbrough Edge and Settlingstones . . . . .	172
'Twixt devil and deep sea, man hacks his caves . . . . .	416
Under my window-ledge the waters race . . . . .	89
Unwelcome child Compassion come . . . . .	416
Upon an obscure night . . . . .	77
Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet . . . . .	97
Very old are the woods . . . . .	159
We are the hollow men . . . . .	285
We ate our breakfast lying on our backs . . . . .	172
We must pass like smoke or live within the spirit's fire . . . . .	99
We thought at first, this man is a king for sure . . . . .	219
We tore the tarry rope to shreds . . . . .	42
We wander now who marched before . . . . .	212
We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage . . . . .	227
We with our Fair pitched among the feathery clover . . . . .	419
Webster was much possessed by death . . . . .	282
Weep not to-day: why should this sadness be? . . . . .	14
What bring you, sailor, home from the sea . . . . .	173
What is the meaning of this Ideal . . . . .	300
What is this life if, full of care . . . . .	131
What lovely things Thy hand hath made . . . . .	158
What shall we do for timber? . . . . .	405
What should we know for better or worse . . . . .	178
What sound awakened me, I wonder . . . . .	49
What was Solomon's mind? . . . . .	230
When first I took to cutlass, blunderbuss and gun . . . . .	373
When I had money, money, O! . . . . .	130
When I have heard small talk about great men . . . . .	258
When I hear laughter from a tavern door . . . . .	2
When I was but thirteen or so . . . . .	293
When I'm alone—the words tripped off his tongue . . . . .	258
When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder . . . . .	394
When the proud World does most my world despise . . . . .	339
When the sheen on tall summer grass is pale . . . . .	138
When the tea is brought at five o'clock . . . . .	193
When we come to that dark house . . . . .	260

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

When we would reach the anguish of the dead . . . . .	257
When, when, and whenever death closes our eyelids . . . . .	242
When will men again Lift irresistible fists . . . . .	436
When within my arms I hold you . . . . .	341
When you and I go down . . . . .	198
When you destroy a blade of grass . . . . .	162
Where are the passions they essayed . . . . .	24
Where I go are flowers blooming . . . . .	396
Where is the hand to trace . . . . .	179
While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead . . . . .	241
While the Tragedy's afoot . . . . .	186
White founts falling in the courts of the sun . . . . .	164
Who are you, Sea Lady . . . . .	225
Who called? I said, and the words . . . . .	160
Who, in the garden-pony carrying skeps . . . . .	314
Who is it talks of ebony? . . . . .	134
Who rideth through the driving rain . . . . .	98
Who shall invoke when we are gone . . . . .	297
Who will remember, passing through this Gate . . . . .	259
Why does the thin grey strand . . . . .	239
Will Love again awake, that lies asleep so long? . . . . .	10
Will you be as hard . . . . .	35
Wind whines and whines the shingle . . . . .	218
Wine and woman and song . . . . .	91
With burning fervour . . . . .	437
With coat like any mole's, as soft and black . . . . .	365
With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars . . . . .	96
With Fifteen-ninety or Sixteen-sixteen . . . . .	145
With me, my lover makes . . . . .	412
With Thee a moment! Then what dreams have play . . . . .	100
With these heaven-assailing spires . . . . .	103
Woman full of wile . . . . .	401
Wouldst thou be wise, O Man? At the knees of a woman begin . . . . .	4
Yea, gold is son of Zeus: no rust . . . . .	70
You tossed a blanket from the bed . . . . .	279

PRINTED IN  
GREAT BRITAIN  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
OXFORD  
BY  
CHARLES BATEY  
PRINTER  
TO THE  
UNIVERSITY